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The superstition of technique by Mario Luzi
Idealization and catharsis by André Green

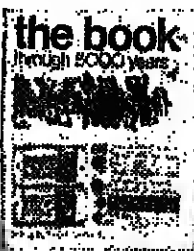
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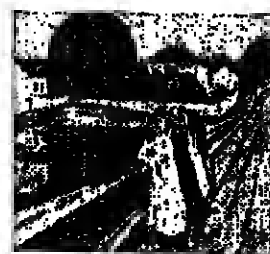


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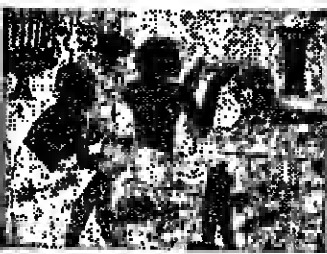
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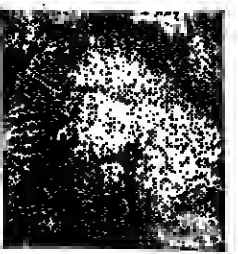
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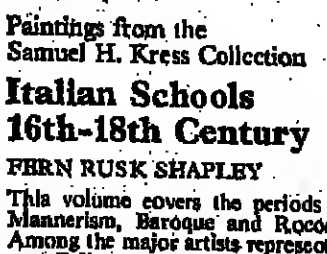
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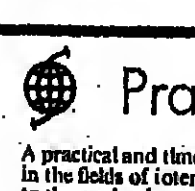
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The poetry of the trenches

POETRY is a literary genre which has had a brief and curious history. It began and ended in the First World War—or rather, it should say that the poetic materials were produced during that war period; for the defining of the genre, the sifting out and sifting and comparing, began after the war, and is still going on. A war poem has emerged—can find it in the bibliography of the 1920s and 1930s, and of the 1940s and 1950s, and of the 1960s and 1970s. The sense of the truth that a recent anthology of war poems, or a current critical book like *Out of Battle*, expresses that the First World War is our war, and it is based on a notion from the great mass of war poems, that a selection of that war is perhaps the oddest of the problem. No other war, or since, produced so much of the poetic materials. There were poems written earlier wars but they were not war poems in the sense. In a battle-piece—the Battle of Brunanburgh—or the subject is action: Marguerite Bouvard (Oct 5th, £7.25); *The Indian Ocean: In Politics, Economics and Military Importance* edited by Alvin J. Cottrell and Burrell (Nov 21st, £10.50); and *Weapons Technology and Arms Control* by W. F. Bidde, foreword by Lord Zuckerman (Nov 21st, £8.50).

During the last few months of his life, months of preparation to gallant comradeship and open air, the poet-soldier told with all the simple force of genius the sorrows of youth about to die; he was willing to die for the dear England whose beauty and majesty he knew, and he advanced towards the brink with perfect serenity, with absolute conviction of the rightness of his country's cause and a heart devoid of hate for fellow-men.

One obvious answer is that the young men who were fighting were the kind of young men who write poems. Schoolboys and university undergraduates write poems; middle-class and upper-class adolescents write poems. And these were the young men who were the young officers. They were young, they were callow; they were bred in the playing-fields of Eton tradition—even when their schools were the dreariest grammar schools. And they had before them,

at the beginning of the war, two models of how to write ignorantly but romantically about war. One was Housman, a poet who knew nothing about war or soldiers, but knew everything about melancholy and the sentimental charm of dying young; the other was Rupert Brooke. Four Brooke can scarcely be held responsible for the influence he had on one soldier-poet. He expressed one state of mind—that of the recruiting officer rather than the front lines—and if he was taken up and mythologized, it was partly because that state of mind was common among young men at the war's beginning, and among their elders, too. Reading the eulogy Winston Churchill delivered at Brooke's death, one feels that one is overhearing the Muse of Bad War Poetry encouraging the poets:

And that is probably true; Brooke probably did set out for the Dardanelles with all those innocent and self-regarding emotions. That is why poets who had not naturally got to the cause of the war, or why, for example, Charles Sorley wrote:

He is far too obsessed with his own sacrifice, regarding the going to war of himself (and others) as a highly intense, remarkable and sacrificial exploit, whereas it is merely the common demand of him (and others) by the turn of circumstances. . . . He has clothed his attitude in line words; but he has taken the sentimental attitude.

A point one would not discover from reading the more recent collections is that much of the verse written by men who were actually in the trenches (and what better definition of "war poetry" could there be?) was not about the war at all. It was about home, school, pals, and games, or it was about natural scenes—"green banks of daffodil" and "the gorse upon the twilight down". And if it was about the dead, it treated death as it should be treated, poetically. In these early and bad war poems, the dead

are always content, glad that they died for England's Honour, pleased that they will not grow old (the shadow of Housman's 'Inglorious Jui shows here). They are often described in loving terms which have a homosexual ring now, but which were perhaps only another aspect of the public-school tradition. These poems are what Owen meant by "the old lie" (there is actually one called "Dulce et Decorum est pro Patria Mori", by Major Sydney Oswald of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, which is so precisely what Owen was condemning that he might have been writing his own poem for Major Oswald's instruction). They comprise a poetic tradition that now must be repellent to a modern reader; but, along with the poems in praise of cricket and the home thoughts and "Mother's Birthday", they tell us a good deal about the men who fought that war, and especially about the officer corps.

Some time during the war, a radical change took place: War, which at the first had been a set of conventional concepts of Honour and Country, became a direct source of poetic energy. To say that a subject is "poetic", in this sense, is simply to say that it releases emotion of itself, apart from the presentation of it (as Wordsworthian "poetic nature" was a source of poetic energy for the Georgians). It may have been the slaughter at the first battle of the Somme, or it may have been—as Blunden thought—Piss-schendaels, or it may simply have been the sustained experience of trench warfare. At any rate it is clear that by the middle of the war a

radical poetic transformation had occurred, new subjects and new attitudes became possible, and what Isaac Rosenberg called "trench poems" began to appear. It became possible to write realistically about death, not simply as a sentimental possibility, but as a statistical probability, and as a part of the environment (Rosenberg's "Dead Man's Dump" is a good example: it was written in May, 1917). This transformation is more radical than anything that had happened in poetry for a century or more; it made *The Waste Land*, and thus all postwar poetry, possible.

These later trench poems form almost the whole of what we now think of as the war poems of the First World War; and we choose and admire them, surely, because they are the ancestors of our own modern tradition. They are ironic, realistic, and anti-conventional. And they are resigned—like the speaker at the end of *The Waste Land*. It was this quality of resignation which Yeats considered unpoetic, and for which he rejected all war poems from his *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*.

I have rejected these poems for the same reason that made Arnold withdraw his *Empedocles on Etna* from circulation: positive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies.

He compared the treatment of death by the war poets to an automobile accident. "Some blunderer has driven his car on to the wrong side of the road—that is all." But of course that was the kind of dying which was taking place in the trenches—random, accidental, meaningless, and in no sense tragic. One must take death as it comes, not as tragedians would have us take it: tragedy is not a posture we assume for literary reasons.

Trench poetry was a new kind of poetry, and it implied a new kind of audience. Edward Thomas made the distinction in a review he wrote early in the war:

The worst of the poetry being written today is that it is too deliberately, and not instinctively, English. It is for an audience; there is more in it of the shouting of the rhetorician, reciter, or

politician than of the ink of friends and lovers.

The poems of Owen and Rosenberg and Graves have no shouting in them; they are for an audience, but it is an audience of themselves, and men like them, the talk of friends and lovers. One feels most strongly in Owen that the poems are addressed to the only audience capable of understanding them, an audience of trench-soldiers: poems like "Apologia Pro Poemate Meo" deliberately reject the possibility of a civilian reader. And one finds the same assumption in many other poems of the time—in Graves's "Letter to S.S. from Munster Wood" and Sassoon's "To Any Dead Officer", and Sorley's "All the hills and vales along". This, too, is a radical change in the idea of poetry: it denies the notion, so current just before the war, that a popular poetry could be written for a general audience, and it denies it not on poetic grounds but on the grounds of experience.

For a poet like Owen, the war released his poetic talent. But it was clearly a far more difficult problem for men like Blunden and Thomas who had trusted themselves in the

tradition of English nature poetry before they were exposed to the trenches. Blunden always thought of himself as a country poet, and Thomas belonged to the same category, and for them the crucial question was this: What happens to the idea of the supportive power of beneficent nature when a nature poet goes to war? Thomas didn't solve this problem, didn't even try to solve it, and the few poems that he wrote explicitly about soldiers are about soldiers in England, in the natural world—"As the Team's Head-Brass" and "A Private", for example. But Blunden did, and his war poems are important, and excellent, because they show how a nature poet's gifts might be transformed to war poetry, by dwelling on the natural nightmare of war. It is a new use of nature in poetry, and one that removes Wordsworthian nature from the range of modern poetic possibilities.

As a phenomenon, the poetry of the First World War will continue to interest us, though for largely non-poetic reasons. As an expression of sensitive men responding to the most miserable war ever fought, it is

The Medium

My answer would have to be music which is always deniable, since in my silence, which you question, is only a landscape

of water, old trees and a few irresolute birds. The weather is also inconstant. Sometimes the light is golden, the leaves unseasonable.

And sometimes the ice is red, and the moon hangs over it, peeled, like a Chinese fruit. I am sorry not to be more articulate.

When I try, the words turn ugly as rats and disorder everything. I cannot be quiet, I want so much to be quiet and loving.

If only you wanted that. My sharpest thoughts wait like assassins always in the dry wheat. They chat and grin. Perhaps you should talk to them?

ELAINE FEINSTEIN

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September 1939

Nicholas Bathall

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Edited, with an introduction and notes, by Norman Thomas di Giovanni

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MEMOIRS

Bridging the abysmal chasm

ALAN MUGGERIDGE:

Memories of Wasted Time
Volume 1: *The Green Stick*
App. Collins, £3.

The title chosen by Malcolm Muggeridge for his autobiographical work is an example of his love of paradox; for surely the work is not a waste of time. It is a memoir of a man who has lived a life of intense activity, and who has been in the pursuit of disillusion. He is a man of his generation (the 1930s) who has been in the pursuit of disillusion. He is a man of his generation (the 1930s) who has been in the pursuit of disillusion. He is a man of his generation (the 1930s) who has been in the pursuit of disillusion.

Most readers of *Out of the Ashes* will find it less satisfying than the first, *The Green Stick*, which was the first of his memoirs. It is a book of the first, Mr. Muggeridge's memoirs, which was the first of his memoirs. It is a book of the first, Mr. Muggeridge's memoirs, which was the first of his memoirs.

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including total insanity, tearing us into schizophrenic pieces, I grasped that over it lay, as it were, a cable-bridge, frail, swaying, but passable. And this bridge, this reconciliation between the black despair of lying bound and gagged in the tiny dungeon of the ego, and soaring upwards into the white radiance of God's universal love, this bridge was the incarnation, whose truth expresses that of the desperate need it meets.

Considering the slower tempo of the 1920s, Mr. Muggeridge did not waste time when he went down from Cambridge. In retrospect, he finds his guiding principle was to "get away"; but at the time getting away was the quickest means of "getting on". Driven, like so many graduates, to school-teaching, he chose jobs which gave him experience abroad, first in a church school in southern India, later as an elementary language teacher in Upper Egypt and lecturer at Cairo University under Bonamy Dobrée. In each case, having

got what he could from the job, he left it in disgust. He would enter journalism, he says, but he would not enter journalism. He would enter journalism, he says, but he would not enter journalism. He would enter journalism, he says, but he would not enter journalism. He would enter journalism, he says, but he would not enter journalism.

Double disillusion followed. The workers' paradise proved a tyranny more absolute than the Tsars'; and his novel was rejected as libellous.

Disillusion had become a habit of life. When the *Guardian* solicited his exposure of the liquidation of the kulaks between F. A. Vajda's denunciation of terror in the Polish Ukraine and in Nazi Germany, he says this was "by way of imagining, of neutralizing some of their effect". Yet as an editor (even of *Punch*), he should surely recognize the power of synchronicity. After all, leaving Russia, he bracketed Nazism and Communism as two aspects of the same totalitarian horror.

The Green Stick ends with the Muggeridges enmeshed in a WTA hotel in Switzerland, while he chronicles his righteous antipathy to the "new civilization", and to write a novel attacking the newspaper which employed him.

Double disillusion followed. The workers' paradise proved a tyranny more absolute than the Tsars'; and his novel was rejected as libellous.

Cultivating the blank spaces

PETER LUKE:
Skyphos and Rellu
223pp. André Deutsch, £2.50.

One of the minor difficulties of life is finding out how different we really are from everyone else. Under all the bluff and bluster of our acquaintances it is hard to believe there can be silly shames and ridiculous panics not unlike our own. Always suspecting, but never having proof, some of us rummage autobiographies and biographies, psychological case histories and even famous trials, in the hope of finding a character who might be our match in absurdity.

But biographies are about exceptional people, and autobiographies always leave out the one thing we want to know. (Why did Edwin Muir go to a psychiatrist, and what did the infant Graham Greene say to his?) Trials and case histories deal with extremes of personality. Few of us dabble in our own faces or chop up children: most of us are afflicted by varieties of shyness, boredom, lust, irritation and intimations of futility that no one else seems willing to describe.

If we define normality as the ability to get through life without being too much noticed or disgraced, a gift for living without excess or fuss, then few books, for sound commercial reasons, are written about normal people. Forgetting the frozen distractions of deviants, we

tend to think normality is boring; and we may find proof of this if, having lived all our lives with prudence and moderation, our only reward at the end is to bore ourselves stiff.

Peter Luke seems to be an ordinary decent upper-class English male. The fact that his grandfather was a Hungarian from Detroit only demonstrates that Eton can do for a family in two generations; that he has married three times shows a leaning towards respectability, not wildness. He has written a book about his own decency and endurance that is never boring and often hilarious—perhaps because inside the ordinary Mr. Luke there lurks a gawking anarchist longing to get out.

His story is familiar: misery, barely borne, at prep school; academic, though not social, failure at public school; adjustment to girls, loss of virginity, a "good" war with an MC, a succession of jobs, a couple of unwise marriages, and then—with that inspired amateurism the Englishman resorts to in emergency—an adaptation of *Madame de Sévigné* that at last brought in real money, which he spent in a very English way on the improvement of some olive groves in Spain.

Familiar this may be; but Mr. Luke has an original talent for writing of the blank spaces between the incidents of life, the grey times of waiting and inertia. He can write gaily of unhappiness, ironically of success,

shyly of his own courage, bravely of his fears. Perhaps only another Etonian will understand how typicallly Etonian is his attitude to everything that ought to be taken seriously. It has been described by people from other schools as flippancy, and here your reviewer must confess an interest.

He can just remember a tutor at Eton—a man usually of enormous patience—crying out "Luke!" in a tone of despair that seemed an anguished plea for intercession by the saint rather than reproach to the inky, stumbling boy. Mr. Luke, masochistically, has kept his school reports.

Many of his pupils are incompetent at managing their own affairs, but Luke is far the most incompetent—and the most irritating—in this way. Always late, always without the right book, always behindhand with his work, he is a trial to me in Pupil Room as he is to his division masters.... He has no idea of concentration and hard work. He has the ability to appear awake and actually to be asleep.

The disapproval was unanimous: "He is dreadfully backward and has a lazy mind"; "The most naturally idle boy I have ever met.... I cannot prophesy anything but failure"; "I am at a loss to find a single redeeming feature." Yet his tutors did notice the redeeming feature and underrated it: "He is quite willing and cheerful in spite of misfortunes." The humorous dilator of which they complained was somehow trans-

formed into qualities that enabled this hopeless pupil to fight with credit in the Western Desert, Italy and France, supported him through failure as a painter, in journalism and the wine trade, shielded him from the savagery of the television jungle, helped him to bear the humiliations of poverty and the grilt of putting from a wife with small children. As he reminds us, of the King's Scholars who left Eton in the late 1930s, a relatively large number showed tendencies towards homosexuality, alcoholism, or suicide. (One wonders what their reports were like.)

Luke, as he calls himself with typical detachment, is a bit gushing about Ireland and France and throws at us when he misguidedly tries to play the man of the world. The conversations he records have sometimes a slickness that reveals the hand of a former script editor of "Armchair Theatre". But his book is well written, not only for its mocking self-portrait, but for a collection of minor characters—a splendid Irish godfather, a Levantine second-hand soldier, subalterns and past loves—that my tired professional writer would like to hurgle.

I have, against all expectations, has somehow scraped a pass in life and won it prize with *Madame de Sévigné*. If we now repeat his tutors' exhortations and ask him to work harder, it is not for his own good or someone else's approval, but for the pleasure he might give us by writing more.

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Monkey business

RONALD MILLAR:

The Pitdown Men
Dollop, Dollinger, £3.20.

The Pitdown largely makes a sorry tale of knives and fossils; it is the most outrageous scientific hoax that has been exposed up to the present. Although it has been proved an impudent imposture, none of the skull bones is more than 500 years old: the perpetrator or perpetrators have not been publicly identified, nor has any plausible explanation of his or their motives been unequivocally established. *The Pitdown Men* is an attempt to unravel the mystery.

Early in 1912 Charles Dawson, a solicitor, amateur geologist, and antiquarian living in Hastings, walked into the room of his friend Smith Woodward, keeper of the department of geology in the British Museum (Natural History), and dumped five fragments of human cranium on the table, exclaiming: "How's that for Heidelberg?" The bones, which were unusually thick, though not thicker than those of some modern skulls, had been artificially stained to simulate mineralized fossils of great age. In 1907 a massive human jaw, without the rest of the skull, had been discovered at Heidelberg and diagnosed as coming from a primitive race perhaps ancestral to modern man. Dawson implied that his fragments represented the skull of a member of the same race. He said that the first was given him by workmen digging gravel from a shallow roadside pit at Pitdown in Sussex in 1908, and that in 1911 he found the other four in heaps of spoil rejected by the diggers as too soft for road repair.

Woodward accepted what he was told, and in May 1912 went to Pitdown with Dawson and Leifur Eiriksson to look for more, and found four further fragments in heaps of soft spoil gravel. None of the pieces was found, or was claimed to have been found, *in situ* in undisturbed gravel. Then, in the presence of Woodward, Dawson uncovered at the bottom of the pit part of the jaw of an orang-utan the chin and condyle had been broken off to confuse identification; the teeth had been filed to simulate the wear on human teeth, and it had been artificially stained to match the cranium. Woodward, an expert on fossil fish but untrained in human anatomy, naively reconstructed the cranium and jaw to make the skull of *Eoanthropus*, the "dawn man".

Certain archaeologists in Sussex thought some of Dawson's earlier finds were "unbelievable": he had been seen hurriedly staining flints and bones. Someone knew Dawson was cheating when he pretended he had got the first five fragments at Pitdown. Someone determined to expose his fraud, and to get him laughed out of court, by introducing the jaw, perhaps with his cutlery, into the jaw. The jaw was accepted as genuine so the double crosser was fooled. Someone then went further and salted the mine with a palaeolithic cricket-bat made from a fossil elephant tusk which Woodward unearthed not even from the gravel but from the soft soil above it. When this, too, was taken seriously the hoaxer gave up and accepted defeat. Who was he?

Brass monkey business

LUCY KAVALER:

Freezing Point
416pp. Newton Abbott: David and Charles, £3.25.

It takes a great deal of skill to steer a path between the precision-made realm of science textbooks and the uninhibited enthusiasm that so often ruins popular accounts of science. Least too much either way and the tale becomes either too dull, for the many or insultingly simplistic for the few. Lucy Kavaler manages to keep between courses very well: the chatty, occasionally garrulous femininity that pops up unexpectedly everywhere in *Freezing Point*, especially whenever animal young are mentioned, establishes a quick and friendly relationship with the novel seeker, while she mollifies the academic with an impressive list of references.

The book's subtitle is "Gold as a matter of life and death" and cold and death are subjects with possibilities far too interesting and wide for the author to be much concerned with such specialized topics as the behaviour of metals at sub-zero temperatures.

Freezing Point turns out to be a strange assortment of topics loosely but intriguingly linked by a single

the missing link between man and ape. In December, 1912, Smith Woodward and Dawson announced their discovery and read a paper on it to a crowded meeting of the Geological Society; although there was some criticism, the find was widely accepted as a genuine fossil of the greatest importance to science.

The canine tooth was missing from the jaw; Woodward added to his reconstruction a model of the tooth as he thought it should have appeared. In 1911, when the three companions resumed their search, Leifur found the missing canine in a heap of spoil, it was the canine of an orang-utan filed to the exact shape of Woodward's model, and coloured with brown paint to match the bones. Woodward was overjoyed, and the doubters were silenced. All the time Dawson had in his possession another fragment of the same cranium and a filed molar tooth which, Woodward said in 1917, he claimed to have found in a heap of stones in a field some two miles away in 1915, the remains of a "second" Pitdown man.

In 1914 Leifur left England, and in 1916 Dawson died. Woodward went on digging alone but found nothing; he went on digging and searching for fourteen years until 1931, without success. In 1931 the Nature Conservancy, in the course of making the Pitdown site a national monument, moved many tons of the gravel, but found nothing in aid to the human remains, the flints, and bits of animal fossils, some of which are now known to have come from as far away as Malta and Tunisia, and none of which came from the Pitdown gravel.

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common denominator could. Miss Kavaler traces the evolution of cold from an uncharitable and bitter enemy to a pliable and useful, if poorly understood, friend. A human being functions well only when his body temperature is between 97 and 102 degrees Fahrenheit. Let this internal temperature fall below 70 for any length of time and he will die. So many humans indigenous to cold regions have adapted to increase their resistance to cold. The natives of the inhospitable islands of Tierra del Fuego keep warm during cold nights by increasing their metabolic rate, for example. Even the Australian aborigine has adapted to sleeping naked in the open by growing an insulating layer of fat. Man the city dweller has lost most of these defences, which anyway fall into insignificance when compared to the adaptability of some insects, which may be frozen to almost absolute zero without losing harm.

Poor as man's resistance may be, it is generally adequate to make cold surgery possible. When the human body is chilled by about 20 degrees below normal all the organs slow down. In particular, the blood flow is reduced to a fraction of normal. Without this effect of cold, the heart transplant industry would never have

Ronald Millar, a layman whose joke went sour was well-acquainted. He devoted the first half of his book to the history of biology, and the second to a discussion of the Pitdown enigma by means of his argument with geologists. Carleton Coon, Sir Kenneth Lennard, and Sir John Huxley are mentioned as critics and frauds. Lennard, he informs us, "is a liar". He terms the canine tooth the "lymphoid piece", a structure unknown to anatomy, and so on.

He reproduces the 1915 Academic picture of the Pitdown scene and says that one among them, however, he does not point out, is that one who was concerned with the first is not there, nor does he consider the several shadowy figures who lurk unseen in the background among the wilds of Sussex. He admits that, "try as I may, I do not see how to come up with a concrete evidence" of the participation of the person whom he suspects, though his suspicion is well founded in view of the glibness and knowledge needed for the forgery.

The real interest of the book, however, is not who did it, but why. It is a classic example of the way in which a single concrete incident, could be taken in by so many different people. It is a study of the human mind in its capacity for self-deception, and of the way in which a single concrete incident, could be taken in by so many different people. It is a study of the human mind in its capacity for self-deception, and of the way in which a single concrete incident, could be taken in by so many different people.

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The eye of even a top scientist sees what he wishes to see, and blind to the highest image that are unworkable. Are honest men today less vulnerable to the subtle crooks? How much of modern science that we accept as eternal truth will one day turn out to be yet another airy nothing? Pitdown's warning is its own.

Or was it a bourgeois revolution?

LAWRENCE STONE:

The Causes of the English Revolution 1688-1689
Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966. Paperback, 90p.

Lawrence Stone says in his preface: "In some ways this book is an attempt to make sense of a deficiency in my pre-1960 writings which critics and friends frequently pointed out. It is devoted to the history of the English Revolution, and the social and political changes which took place in the late 17th century. It is a study of the human mind in its capacity for self-deception, and of the way in which a single concrete incident, could be taken in by so many different people."

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a standing army on the Continental model; at the same time, by divesting itself of the monasteries' ecclesiastical patronage, it relinquished the possibility of controlling the national church. The Reformation ushered in "eighty years of unprecedented social mobility among the landed classes"—and not only among them. There occurred "a massive shift of relative wealth away from both the very rich and the very poor towards the upper middle and middle classes", caused not only by land sales but also by monopolies, and by "the entrepreneurial activities of the new rich and the growing demand for professional services of an increasingly sophisticated society".

Professor Stone rejects the concept of "bourgeois revolution", but describes something uncommonly like what Marxists understand by that phrase: one may point to his frequent comparisons with the French and Russian Revolutions, his emphasis on the importance of London and on the economic crisis of the 1630s, and indeed his useful distinction between the long-term preconditions of revolution, the medium-term precipitants, and the short-term triggers. He suggests an explanation of the differences between the English and other classic European revolutions when he speaks of the cloth trade as "a powerful unifying force in society", linking the interests of some gentlemen with those of spinners, weavers, clothiers and export merchants.

Professor Stone comes from the in-between postwar generation which never read Marx seriously: his quotations from Marx and Lenin are taken at second-hand or from anthologies. This no doubt accounts for the exaggerated deference shown to the first essay "Theories of Revolution" by Crane Brinton, whose good ideas derive from Marx,

and for Professor Stone's failure to appreciate how closely R. H. Tawney's study of religion is related to his social analysis. Professor Stone sees "Puritanism" as one explanation, "a bourgeois-feudal dichotomy" as another. For the latter, he argues, there is "not a shred of evidence". Yet he asserts that though the gentry of the home counties were better off economically than those of the north and west, they were more bitter since they knew what they were missing, hence the loyalty to Church and King of the poor backwoodsmen of the west and north in the civil war, and the rallying to the independent cause of a section of the small gentry of the home counties. How much evidence has Professor

Stone for the assumptions about political motivation concealed in the word "hence"?

At one other point this admirable essay might be improved. Professor Stone refers to "the fact that the Parliamentarians were on the average older than the Royalists by about ten years". No such fact has been established. D. Brundage and D. H. Pennington, and G. E. Aylmer, analysing the attitudes of members of the Long Parliament and of civil servants respectively, concluded that in these social groups there was an age differential, but MPs and civil servants aspired to political power. In the 1630s, when no Parliament

met, ambitious young gentlemen had to hitch their wagons to the King's star. Professor Stone is needlessly puzzled by "the unexpected conservatism of the young", since there is no evidence to justify extending the conclusion from this small sector to the population at large.

But these are trivial complaints. All in all, the third essay in this book contains much the best all-round analysis of the causes of the English Revolution that we have. It synthesizes and makes sense of the research of a whole generation of scholars. It is packed not only with judicious and well-founded generalizations but also with stimulating ideas, expressed with verve and wit.

Thinkers and thoughts

ERIC LUND, MOGENS PHIL, JOHANNES SLOK:

A History of European Ideas
Edited by Ragnhild Hatton.
Translated by W. Glyn Jones.
326pp. C. Hurst, Paperback, £2.75.

To write the history of European thought over the past 2,500 years in about 150,000 words is certainly a heroic enterprise. It is difficult to judge whether the task is more daunting because of the vast reading it demands or the effort of compression and organization it entails. The authors were not daunted and produced their *History of European Ideas* in Danish in 1962, now translated into English from a revised edition. A classical, a scientist and a theologian, they have lightened their load of reading by division of labour. They write clearly and their judgments are balanced and humane. They have a remarkable gift for pre-empting ideas in a few words with a minimum of distortion. If the history

of ideas were no more than the summary of the ideas of past thinkers, it would be difficult to better this book.

The chapters on Israel and on the Greco-Roman world, where the interests of all three authors overlap, are particularly good, whether the subject is Aristotelian dynamics, Hellenistic divine kingship, or the similarities between stoicism and Christianity. The reader is more likely to be disappointed by the later chapters, "Man liberates himself" (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) and "Secularisation" (eighteenth century to the present). There are still good things to be found, like the presentation of Luther's theology of justification and of Kant's critique of Hume. But in these later chapters, the book becomes much more patchy and the writing often ceases to communicate intellectual excitement.

The authors discuss the ideas of some 200 creative individuals, finding space for Niels Hemmingsen, Ole Rømer, Ludvig Holberg and Wilhelm Leibniz. But they leave out Voltaire, Rousseau, Erasmus, Vasari, Loyola,

Bodin, Boileau, Vico, Diderot, Dürer, Weber, Keynes. As this list suggests, the book is weak on Mediterranean and Catholic Europe, ignores aesthetics altogether and shows little interest in the social sciences. Perhaps the authors should have added one more individual to their team. The reader would be well advised to use this book in conjunction with one of its few rivals in the field, Friedrich Heer's *The Intellectual History of Europe*, which is better on the medieval and early modern periods but leaves out antiquity and is weaker on science.

The introductory chapter throws out some interesting ideas about tensions in European thought, but these suggestions are all too rarely pursued in the text. This is not a book for anyone interested in the interpretation rather than the summary of ideas. There is still a need, and a very great need it is, for a history of ideas "without names", which focuses not on individuals but on problems, concepts, traditions, paradigms, movements and styles of thought.

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Es ist zu hoffen, dass diese sehr nützliche Arbeit Kuczynskis gleich seinen anderen Arbeiten die Aufmerksamkeit des Forschers und Lehrers auf sich zieht, um die Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterklasse mit neuen Materialien versehen. Insbesondere der jungen Generation noch besser nahebringen zu können.

(Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft)

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Plugger's round

GORDON WILLIAMS:

Walk Don't Walk

288pp. Hodder and Stoughton, £2.40.

There's a moral in *Walk Don't Walk* for all writers who sit night after night bashing out creative prose on their aged typewriters, and dreaming of success despite the steady flow of rejection-slips: the moral is that if the garret doesn't get you, the plugola circuit will. The way Gordon Williams tells it, there seems only the smallest chance that bright-eyed, bushy-tailed writers embarking on their first American tour will come through with their talents and livers intact. Dylan Thomas was a well-known victim, and gets a mention or two from Mr Williams, though since his day, it seems, the American PR machine has become larger, glossier and more lethal.

Graham Cameron, a little-known Scots writer who has been living in a crabby London flat along with his wife and small children, is invited by

his American publisher to make a promotion tour for his latest book. Since his childhood, Cameron has pictured America as a land of stars and money; he's seen every movie that matters and most of those that don't; his heroes are Gene Autry, Rhonda Fleming, Leadbelly, and all the others; but now it's his turn to fill the high spots. "The stealing of shirts belonging to culture-mad hosts would become a lovable foible. John Malcovic Brinnin would ask him out for a house-wire." The truth of the matter is, of course, that no one in the United States seems to know a thing about Rhonda Fleming, and no one is too eager to learn. What they are eager to do is to make as much money as they can in the shortest time possible, and within hours of his arrival Cameron has embarked on his round-trip of states and plug-shows, and is fast discovering that he has a large, if previously submerged talent for wowing American audiences, principally with witty hodge about swinging London. He also discovers a talent for drinking, and it, when he first

arrives in America, he's wondering about D. Thomas's "direct insult to the brain", by the time the tour is over he's within a bottle or two of having made it. All this, along with the fact that his lustful dreams of winning starlets have turned to a dull ache in the crotch, leads Cameron from starry-eyed expectation to bleary-eyed desperation, and he retreats to the stabilizing influence of his wife and kids just in time.

Mr Williams gets Cameron through his ordeal with a minimum of portentiousness and a maximum of witty invective; most tactics, and a great relief for the reader, America, in all its violent plasticity, is no less offensive for being made funny, and Cameron's self-defensive puns and gags, supported by a winning line in self-mockery which begins with the references to Dylan Thomas and Brinnin and is enhanced by the way the narrative lapses wryly into the third person, provides a wealth of quotable aphorisms, even if they do come a little too hard and fast to be completely plausible.

Tax-free treasures

L. P. HARTLEY:

The Collections

134pp. Hamish Hamilton, £1.75.

The born novelist is instantly recognizable by the resonance or memorableness of his opening sentences. The French are best at this: "Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure." "Auparavant l'homme est mortel," and so on. Among the English novelists Jane Austen scores high with the opening of *Emma* and Ford with "This is the saddest story I have ever heard". Of contemporary novelists, Graham Greene got off to a good start in *England Made Me* with "She might have been waiting for her lover", and L. P. Hartley in *The Go-Between* with "The past is another country: they do things differently there". In his latest novel he's at it again: "Someone has said that your life changes when nobody living has the right to hold you." Asked to identify the author, most readers

would have little difficulty in picking the general target area: later Austen is a possibility. In any case, it would certainly be some quintessentially English middle-class figure. The speaker is clearly a bachelor, in spirit if not in fact, with a sort of cosy "good breeding", a certain nostalgia for the nursery, and in sexual matters (one would guess) a fastidious and eccentric attitude with just the faintest suggestion of an interest in what the fudge magazines coyly call "discipline". Seemingly indeed! At his age.

It's a good opening sentence, however, because it's kind of catchy, and because it introduces us straight away to the Peter Pan social world in which not only this, but all Mr Hartley's work, lives and moves and has its being. It's really the present, not the past, which is his "other country". The past, albeit an idealized one, is his homeland. In spite of one or two half-hearted applications, the present has never granted him a residence permit, only a transit visa. (We do things differently here.) It's a good opening sentence in another

way too, of course, for it can't really be supposed that the author isn't going in for a little harmless self-parody, rather as one might allow oneself a second cream bun or get into bed before saying one's prayers. The whole book is strictly tongue-in-cheek.

Henry James, who deserves a better fate, is the idol of the nursery school of English novelists, and the Jamesian shadow hovers over Mr Hartley's story in such a way as to suggest that literary history, but repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce; for what is powerful and compelling in *The Spoils of Poynton*, to which we are specifically referred, is bland and inconsequential in *The Collections*. The story of a misanthropic old bachelor hiding away his objects d'art from the prying eyes of the inland revenue commissioners, only to have them picked all one at a time by a kleptomaniac niece who subsequently elopes with the plain detective hired to protect them, will be compulsive reading only for the most devoted Hartleyites.

Against the wind

KEITH HANKS:

Falk

285pp. Cassell £2.40.

Falk is one of those apocalyptic novels which come laden with portent and overshadowed by towering moral issues. Two essential ingredients for that formula are a hero larger than life and a prose style larger than the page, and Falk possesses both. The eponymous hero is depicted as a Titanic figure, racked by conflicting emotions and burdened by a destiny which affects millions of lives; the narrative is raked too—mostly by the thunder of many rhetoric—though whether it's likely to affect many lives is quite another matter. It is not, of course, the importance of the issues, and tropicisms in the book that make it seem pretentious; but the notion of that importance has spurred Keith Hanks to provide his principal character with well-worn Messianic traits and to tell his story in an equally well-worn Messianic prose, and the result is wearying when it is not risible. The constant *Summe und Drang* lends a persistent sense of wilful excess, as if a man with something to say had chosen to go to a deserted cliff-top, carefully picked for its dramatic starkness, and had there howled his message into the teeth of a gale.

Falk, a potent advocate for social change, has pride, responsibility for the "Devastation" which has laid Britain waste: the outcome of a People's Crusade in support of peace. The aftermath is a strangely muddled

affair, seeming, at times, like a post-Armageddon state with people practising all manner of savagery, and at other times manifesting the altogether comelier strictures of wartime economy measures. Stricken by lust, guilt and a dizzying sense of purpose, Falk is none the less able to summon a degree of efficiency and swiftness the country running more or less smoothly. Plans are afoot, though, in our Falk and reinstate the

Passing phases

LESTERY:

A Terminus Place

183pp. Michael Joseph, £2.25.

The hero of Lee Storey's novel goes by the same name as the author, and the book is dedicated to, among others, Dorothy Ann Kitchely, which is the name of Lee Storey's wife. Father is a writer in Hampstead, so that the reader might be excused for assuming that Jack Trevor Storey's son, Lee, has written a small chunk of autobiography. It covers the two years in the late 1960s when the Lee and Dorothy of the novel met, fell in love, became a sort of local legend (as together they produced a son, and parted with bewildered bitterness on Dorothy's part and a selfish but somewhat justified determination on Lee's).

Both authors are probably going to get very tired of having their similarities pointed out to them, but Storey and Lee certainly share a

government in exile, and when the invasion comes the mayhem starts all over again, during which Falk is revealed to be a man sent by God, and Jesus Christ puts in a guest appearance. The point would seem to be that evil may well triumph over good, but men of God triumph over themselves. The novel, unfortunately, does not manage to triumph over its irrepressible desire to appear triumphal.

tone and an angle on things. "Our Tony was a civil servant just like his Mum, but our Joyce did hair. This was just a passing phase, you understand, because much later our Joyce was a civil servant too. You see, it all works out in the end, doesn't it?" Cracks like these from *A Terminus Place* could as well have issued from Jack Trevor Storey's witty and jaundiced pen. But Lee Storey's ideas are all his own; he conveys the fudicrous intensity of an adolescent affair, with love and pity as well as a very funny accuracy. He manages to see Dorothy's North Country parents for what is worthy in them, as well as fulfilling their music-hall roles as the shoddy in-laws of that wild-boy, himself.

Apart from his irritating habit of stating almost every sentence as a new paragraph, and one or two surprising bursts of what Lee Storey would certainly call poetic writing, novelist Lee Storey has made a very good start.

Ludwig Feuerbach
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Herausgegeben von Prof.
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Henry Spitzmuller

« Pour l'ouïe pensée occidentale, ignorer son Moyen Age c'est s'ignorer elle-même » a écrit Etienne Gilson. A partir de la deuxième moitié du II^e siècle une poésie merveilleuse, musicale, populaire, imagée ou plus exactement analogique a été inventée en Europe. Cela a duré mille ans. Ces mille ans de délire nous n'en lisons jamais les textes, car ils n'étaient pas publiés. Les voici.

Michal Cournot
Nouvel Observateur

L'ART DE L'ICONE

Paul Evdokimov

« ... une somme sur la Beauté. »

Olivier CLEMENT

L'ASPHYXIE ET LE CRI

Jean Onimus

« C'est une grande voix qui vient de se lever. Pour moi, celle d'un frère aîné qui me reconforte... Vous reconnaîtrez sa pensée sur cette révolution culturelle qui, pour la première fois depuis des siècles et des siècles, touche au fondement même de l'existence. »

Maurice CLAVEL
Nouvel Observateur

L'AMENAGEMENT DU TEMPS

Jacques de Chalendar

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Pierre DROUIN
Le Monde

JULIEN GREEN

L'homme qui venait d'ailleurs
Jacques Pellé

« Dans le livre que Jacques Pellé m'a consacré se lisent certaines des pages les plus lucides qu'on ait écrites sur mon œuvre. Me frappent surtout les correspondances, innombrables entre les personnages de l'ouïe mes récits, ces appels d'un roman à l'autre qui font de douze livres une seule histoire, retracent l'itinéraire que j'ai suivi sans bien le savoir depuis mon enfance et dont Jacques Pellé a découvert les jalons que je croyais disparus. »

Julien GREEN
Ce qui reste de jour
(Journal décembre 1969)

desclée de brouwer

An informality all his own

P. M. KEAN:

Chaucer and the Making of English Poetry
Vol. 1: Love Vision and Debate.
207pp. £3.
Vol. 2: The Art of Narrative.
271pp. £3.75.
Routledge and Kegan Paul, £6.50 the set.

Eschewing the fashionable practice of seeking prestige by collecting other scholars' essays, P. M. Kean has written her own book. It is long, and sometimes discursive, but scrupulously free from current jargon and serenely indifferent to vogue, concerned throughout with the particularity of Chaucer's achievement. She begins by remarking that while on the one hand concepts of style and poetry such as we find in Dante did not become important in England till Chaucer's time, on the other hand his narrative verse, with its easy movement, clear enumeration of details, and realistic dialogue, developed naturally out of earlier English practice, as exemplified in verse romances like *Deuare, Ofeu, Ywaine*, or even *Harold*, which have an informality lacking in Chaucer's French sources. If European influence shows in his extension of poetic concernment to science and philosophy, the urbane manner that accommodates the new informality has no parallel.

To illustrate this urbanity Miss Kean begins with the short, often epigrammatic, poems usually dismissed as minor or occasional like the "Envoy" to Birkton and Scogan that fulfill primarily a social function (as some "minor" verse of Auden's still does). Where moral concerns enter (e.g. in "Truth" and "Fortune"), she finds Senecan as well as Boethian overtones. The *Book of the Duchess*, with its vivid impression of the relations of the *deceased personae* to their society, she sees as a masterpiece of the urbane style; she absolves the Dreamer from the usual charge of ineffectuality, and by comparing pertinent passages in Machiavelli shows how Chaucer's "naturalistic" characters developed out of the essentially stylized form of the French love-visions. As for his other achievements in this genre, she extends the range of some recent Oxford studies by tracing the infusion of philosophical ideas that he found in Macrobius. A poet with such sophisticated interests would not, she implies, misread the *Roman de la Rose*, or take its speeches or characters out of context, yet would be capable of envisaging the relations of Venus and Nature as ultimately more harmonious than Jean de Meun allowed. At the same time Chaucer's vernacular reading prompted him to give to the goddess Fame (whom he associates primarily with literary reputation) "an unmistakably English accent" and to describe her temple in complex with a peculiarly English lift. (The claim made at this point that Chaucer borrowed from *Orfeo* needs substantiating: the reference in the notes does not help.)

Truth, in her view, represents the fine flowering of the flexible style of the "minor" poems and the urbane narrative technique; and by deciphering the Boethian concept of love Chaucer has "deepened the whole concept of characterization". Here the comments on "love celestial" are indubitably cryptic; and one may doubt whether Chaucer's young widow had in mind the penitent Magdalene when she said that it would suit her better to live in a cave than go dancing. But most of Miss Kean's *apertures* are illuminating: she notes resemblances between the famous apostrophe to Fortune, "eccentricity of wonders", and "the Envoy to Scogan"; and her reading of the controversial epilogue anticipated in part by a recent review in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* has the virtue of recognizing that the explicitly Christian verses are not intended so much to repudiate the story as to distance it. Chaucer shared with the Renaissance a sense of the pastness of the past.

The second volume is devoted almost entirely to the *Tales*, and over a fifth of it to the first of them.

Miss Kean sees the humanism of *The Knight's Tale* as a synthesis of the divine protagonists, Jupiter, Epheus with Seneca, and so forth. She says only that Chaucer's reading of *Acrid* is reflected in the text, but that Theocritus' *Proem* shows in his circular theme an order on chaos. This is inevitably a high value; but the text is found in the marriage tale, follows there glossed by as a passage from Boethius, and needs glossing.

From this point on the structure—grows somewhat alive, though such passages as comparison of the *Paradise* "Pauze-Semblant" in the *Book of the Rose* well repay attention. Chaucer (if unlike some of his Miss Kean never descends to ancient casting up of moral accounts) differs too far from the *Tales* in taking Chaucer's "intricate" their face value.

Hence she devotes a delightful chapter to his religious poetry, that in his poem tales which the less moving for being impersonal, and his *Book of the Rose* makes clear, that Chaucer as a noble idealist is implicitly indifferent to his merits. Miss Kean notes that too's praise is couched in language which looks like a different from those of the *Tales*. (The *Book of the Rose* makes clear, that Chaucer as a noble idealist is implicitly indifferent to his merits. Miss Kean notes that too's praise is couched in language which looks like a different from those of the *Tales*.)

Professor Zumthor draws no general conclusions, for his is not an interpretation, but an objective reading, and the distinction is of the essence. His rigorous analyses are intended to illuminate the poetic process; they do. The method, for all its limitations, is its own justification, and one can only join with him in hoping that it will indeed encourage others to turn to the texts themselves and indulge in "une lecture, et qui en fait vraiment une, ouverte à l'interprétation qui devra suivre".

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PHILOSOPHY

Many insights, no world-view

JAMES BOGEN:

Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language
Routledge and Kegan Paul, £2.25.
J. M. HACKER:
Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language
Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £4.25.

attracts, and at the same time repels, a scholar about Wittgenstein is that even a few sentences of his writings give the impression of a long and fresh and unified view of the world free of the confusions of uncertainties and tentativeness of academic philosophy, but any study of his ideas, any attempt to compare them to current or traditional philosophy seems to dispel the original impression and leave us in the end morose of not quite conclusive answers with perhaps new and vexing questions of interpretation added. The fact is that many of Wittgenstein's insights and analogies can be applied to those proposed by Norman Malcolm and G. H. Wright can be seen to do this in their different ways) but his philosophy is not and was not intended to be a contribution to the ongoing and cooperative academic tradition sometimes preconized by Ryle (himself a most individual thinker).

Thus, though there is much to be learned from James Bogen, the conclusion of his book seems to be perplexing. Wittgenstein had no philosophy of language. On the contrary, he repeatedly said that language was merely the medium and form of the diversity of human life that he had in mind. He was not a philosopher of language, but a philosopher of human life. He was not a philosopher of language, but a philosopher of human life. He was not a philosopher of language, but a philosopher of human life.

Mr Bogen's manner is that of the seminar-room. More emphasis is placed on interesting philosophical positions than on precise references or historical context. P. M. S. Hacker clearly writes from a well-stocked study and places Wittgenstein against the background of

rather engagingly, to criticize the accounts of language that Wittgenstein might have given but did not give, and to say that the work of constructing a theory of meaning as a remains to be done.

Still, in the course of reaching this slightly negative result many interesting exegetical and philosophical paths are traversed. The early analysis of sense (the "picture theory") is plausibly traced back to the problem of accounting for the sense of false propositions. The change in emphasis in about 1930 is convincingly attributed to the difficulty of accounting for intentionality.

We do indeed find Wittgenstein at this period preoccupied with what it is to understand a proposition, but he saw himself as continuing his earlier work. The analogy of picturing had been intended to account implicitly for intentionality: one fact was a picture of another only when it was (somehow) seen or used as a projection of that other fact. All the same, Mr Bogen is right to point out that the notion of picturing fades out, that the sense and appropriateness of utterances of every kind comes (in Wittgenstein's middle period) to be explained or illuminated by a comparison with various rule-guided activities, and that appeal to rules turns out not to yield an explanation of language since the application of rules is itself a linguistic practice. Whether these represent the successive abandonment of previous positions in the light of arguments is more doubtful. Wittgenstein may want us to be left at each stage with something we cannot explain.

Mr Bogen's manner is that of the seminar-room. More emphasis is placed on interesting philosophical positions than on precise references or historical context. P. M. S. Hacker clearly writes from a well-stocked study and places Wittgenstein against the background of

Hertz, Kant, Schopenhauer and Hume, not against that of J. L. Austin and H. P. Grice, neither of whom Wittgenstein ever mentions or is much mentioned by. The theme of *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language* is that Wittgenstein's philosophy has both negative and positive aspects: the dispelling of illusion and the achievement of a correct logical point of view (*Tractatus* or an *Ubersicht* (*Philosophical Investigations*—Mr Hacker suggests "survey"; "conspicuous" might be better, though it lacks derivatives). Perhaps either can be regarded as a means to the other.

These aspects are shown or studied in relation to what Mr Hacker calls Wittgenstein's metaphysics of experience. The phrase is meant to be a Kantian echo. It seems, however, to have been coined by H. J. Paton and reworked by P. F. Strawson to refer to the slightly different aspects of Kant's first *Critique* with which these authors were in sympathy. Its sense is obscure.

Rationalist and pietist

KEITH WARD:
The Development of Kant's View of Ethics
184pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £2.95.

This monograph is intended for students with some knowledge of Kant's main ethical works who cannot find the time to read his precritical and posthumous writings but would like to know how Kant's views of the nature of morality developed during his life. Keith Ward believes that such a historical understanding will protect Kant's readers from some common errors about his ethical doctrines by revealing an unresisted

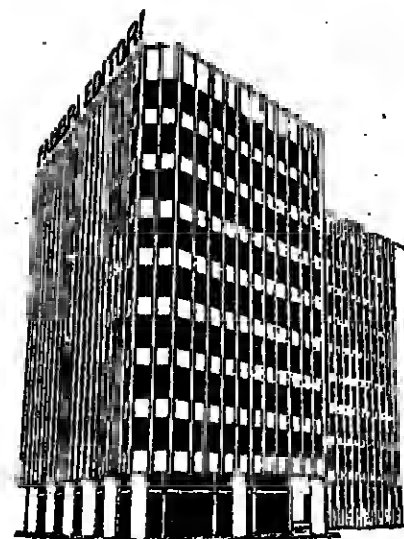
Mr Hacker uses it to mean the solution of the problems of self-consciousness, of the knowledge of other minds, and of the knowledge of objects, the last-named not being treated in his book. Now, it is the case that Wittgenstein gave or even failed to give us a priori proofs that a certain conception of ourselves and of others is a condition of the possibility of any experience whatsoever? Certainly not: as Mr Hacker himself says, Wittgenstein continually insists "that knowledge has no foundations, that grounds come to an end in action not in intuition". Besides (as is especially clear in his late work *On Certainty*) basic certainties are relative to forms of life, and pictures of the world might vary in unimaginable ways. But if so, Wittgenstein had no metaphysics of experience and Mr Hacker will suffer from what Wittgenstein might have called a *Problemlösung*.

Still, if the conception of *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language*, too, can be criticized,

much in its execution must be praised. Mr Hacker helps us to follow the original attraction of Schopenhauer's views, the long struggle against solipsism, the change from the "realist" semantics of the *Tractatus* to the "constructivist" approach of his later writings, the impact of Hume's lectures, and the flirtation with positivism. Perhaps he might have connected the last two more closely: the verification principle seems to have been suggested by reflection on the meaning of mathematical propositions. Mr Hacker's sympathy fails to extend to the mystical and ethical elements in Wittgenstein (and indeed in Schopenhauer). In this connection he finds their remarks "oriental", "obscure", even "notorious", and supports by mere "shreds of an argument". Yet these elements were of the first importance for the writers whom Mr Hacker has chosen to explicate, and his choice was clearly and laudably inspired by the fact that some of the things they said were not immediately obvious.

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Viewpoint

BY CLIVE JAMES

ON TELEVISION recently I was faced with the problem of giving a considered opinion about Ken Russell's new film *Savage Messiah* in just over one minute. I ended up saying that Russell was a defeated and self-servicing man who had made a seriously intended film about an important artist, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, and that viewers should feel duty-bound to go and see it, despite the possibility that they, as I had, might find the work glib, light-minded, tasteless and hysterical.

As a critic all I need to care about is results, so it was doubtless self-indulgent thus to agonize about giving a balanced judgment. But you need to know only a little about the way films are financed to realize what an astonishingly forceful personality Russell must be, and what fanatisms of loyalty he must be able to command: must of his film projects can look nothing short of suicidal to the industry's bag-men, and are set up and carried out on sheer guts and faith. Russell double-mortgaged his house to make *Savage Messiah*. He broke the first rule of show business, which declares that thou shalt never use thine own dough.

His impudence with those never-never directors who make fortunes out of filming commercials but who never stop complaining about lack of finance for their pet projects is consequently fully justified. Russell's intransigence, his courage, his organizational ability, his consuming drive to get things done—all these qualities I find admirable and feel obliged to praise. There are several kinds of false tone emanating from the vicinity of Russell's bulky person, but one particular kind is conspicuously missing—the humble whine. The five-year gap between some of our other important directors' films somehow always turns out to be the fault of philistine executives and a corrupt industry. Wrinkling one's nose at this high-pitched buzz, it's hard to avoid the impression that more might be achieved if more self-elected talents had more ideas and more energy—if, in a phrase, they were more like Ken Russell.

But with all that said (and on television, of course, it barely got hinted at) it still needs to be asserted that Russell's approach to his primary subject-matter is that of a maverick steam-hammer with delusions of sensitivity. His television film about Richard Strauss identified the artist's life with the artist's work to a way which for tendentiousness, factitiousness and general all-round not-to-be-boredness established—one thought at the time—an unsurpassable record. Appreciation of the film's vigour and spontaneity was largely dependent on ignorance of its subject. It was useless to ask how the film's admirers reconciled the clown Russell had made of Strauss with the glory Strauss made of the Trio in the last act of *Rosenkavalier*, since the film's admirers had never heard that opera (or, indeed, of that opera) and had no intention of hearing it.

Russell's preoccupation with the Strauss film demonstrated this incoherently—was with scandal. And the main purpose served by *Savage Messiah*, apart from leaving the Strauss film's tiresomeness recorded in tattered minds, is to convince us that Russell's preoccupation is still with scandal even when he approves of the artist. For all Russell admires Gaudier-Brzeska, he can't help trivializing him; can't help suggesting that the sculptor's undoubted genius had something to do with being around like some rotten young actor in some stupid little experimental film and with shouting wet opinions in a piping treble. And the bitter truth about Gaudier is that his magnificent talent ran against such manifestations of buffoonery, and that what was unique about him was not the turmoil of his life—which most young artists share, the unfigured especially—but the repose of his art.

Critical response to the film of *The Godfather* has so far mainly rolled unobtrusively down the same old highly-polished groove. Before the film had even had its first press showing in London, the box-office gross for America, Australia and Japan had already gone over the £100 million dollar mark. It was the biggest success since the dreaded *Love Story*. As the critics had had no trouble proving—since anybody who could count without taking his hands out of his pockets agreed with them—*Love Story* had made all its money by a trick, the trick being to dress up a piece of half-witted school romance as a hip tragedy. It followed that *The Godfather* was likewise piling up its mazzamas by laceration. You could bet your life that our critics weren't going to sit still for such blatant exploitation; one and all they rose to the task of telling the film's gigantic public how it was about to be fooled. And I suppose there is something in what they've all united to say: the film does peddle the virtues of family life, does reinforce the business ethic, and does tap our latent reserves of neanderthal defensiveness and paranoia. None of this, however, stops it from being a masterpiece, and if the Sicilian idyll had been shorter and some of the other episodes more detailed, it would have been a masterpiece full-blown.

I've admired Francis Ford Coppola's direction ever since *Yankee Doodle Boy* demonstrated his gift for implication-laden taciturnity: the library assistant roller-skating lyrically through the book-stacks was an economically luxurious image. Even in the teeth-twisting sentimentality of *Yankee Doodle Boy* he managed to discover something solid. Collaborating on the screenplay of *The Godfather*, Coppola has helped Martin Scorsese find a shape and force that the novel lacked, lacked along with all the other things it lacked, such as even the slightest trace of sexuality.

The critic who said that the film was devoid of the novel's sense of evil must be out of his tiny mind. Making the final move of killings take place actually during the christening, Coppola is able to show Don Michael (played by the excellent Al Pacino) claiming to renounce Satan at the very moment he embraces evil for ever. This simple, bold hugeness of construction is filled in throughout by the most meticulous attention to detail.

With the exception of Luca Brasi, who is as underwritten in the film as he is overwritten in the novel, the characters are given a complexity of aliveness on the screen that is never approached on the page. Coppola's handling of actors is so unobtrusively masterly that it seems to have lifted most of our critics back into their usual delusion that actors direct their own scenes. A television colleague recently assured me that the film had no sense of period. Precisely so: all those reconstructed art deco interiors and rehabilitated Corbucci and Packard are never dwelt upon for a single indulgent second—the camera, like a contemporary eye, gives no time to enjoying itself. The limits of film are the limits of naturalism, but all naturalism's virtues are there too. Children grow, the seasons turn, time marches, I had a minute and a half of screen-time in which to assess *The Godfather* and sang its praises without a quibble. There are things wrong with the film, but I don't see how its creativity can be denied.

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Flaubert, c'est moi

As predicted in the TLS (September 24, 1971) Jean-Paul Sartre's mammoth introduction to Gustave Flaubert has not only been published, but has also been published in a very accessible form. The book is now three volumes and some of the most closely printed pages under the sun. It is a good deal more than the first two. In the first two volumes, the author's aim was to provide a complete and accurate account of the whole of Flaubert's life and work. In the third volume, the author's aim was to provide a complete and accurate account of the whole of Flaubert's life and work. The book is now three volumes and some of the most closely printed pages under the sun. It is a good deal more than the first two. In the first two volumes, the author's aim was to provide a complete and accurate account of the whole of Flaubert's life and work. In the third volume, the author's aim was to provide a complete and accurate account of the whole of Flaubert's life and work.



Gustave Flaubert at the age of twelve, drawn by his elder brother Achille. Overleaf: Flaubert as a lieutenant in the National Guard.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: L'Idiot de la famille
Volume III: 665pp. Paris: Gallimard. 65fr.

Flaubert, that Sartre is super-adding on Flaubert a grid of vocabulary and reference which derives from existentialism and his own. For Flaubert, "l'art n'est que la manifestation de la vie vers le monde". Incapable of edging out of words, this, exactly, is the theme of *Les Mots*. Like Flaubert is now shown as a man whose life was a struggle to escape the constraints of language and to find a way to express himself. The book is a masterpiece of scholarship and a work of art. It is a must for anyone who wants to know more about Flaubert.

the relations between art and society, between author and public, between speech and substance in the period from Romanticism to Mallarmé—a period which Sartre has always seen as crucial to the development of modernity.

Sartre's operative distinction is that between *névrose* and *névrosisme*, between the individual who is creatively responsive to a generalized, historical neurosis, and the "neurotic" as an infirm or eccentric extremist. Flaubert's oeuvre is that of a *névrosé*, but not of a *névrosisme* as for example, one might describe that of Nerval. Flaubert has invested enormous ingenuity, psychic economy and material cunning into preserving the distinction. His *névrose* matches and, in a sense, masters the ideological falsehood, the "fausse situation", which pervades mid-nineteenth-century society: "la névrose est alors positive, elle apparaît comme l'unique moyen concevable en 1850 pour que quelque chose comme l'Art soit possible."

The objective circumstances, says Sartre, are negative. There is no more coherent medium of communication between novelist and poet and public because "the attitudes of the autonomous *littérateur* and of the bourgeois utilitarian are irreconcilable." The artist tries to persuade himself that he is writing for a posterity in which he does not really believe or for a deity who no longer gives any sign of existence. His absolute claims for the creative supremacy of the imagination—the Kantian-Romantic legacy—have "dematerialized" the objective world. The writer has no natural reader. He has no justifying metaphysics of transcendent values. Thus he opposes to the indifference of the bourgeois the feigned indifference of his dandyism (Baudelaire) or that of a strategic alienation (Flaubert). The relationship between artist and public is, in essence, one of mutual loathing. Yet literature flourishes and *Madame Bovary* will become the literary winner of the age. How is this contradiction to be explained?

Sartre worries the question interminably and from many angles. The *névrose* of the artist is at once genuine and feigning. He is trapped in but also makes strategic use of the status of "strangeness", of primal irresponsibility assigned to him by the bourgeoisie and enforced on him by the power relations of a capitalist society. The post-Romantic writer partakes of "une hystérie objective": he imitates "en y croyant l'attitude du schizophrène envers le monde". The bourgeois public, on the other hand, both condemns the artist for his licence—Baudelaire and Flaubert are prosecuted for obscenity—and compensates for its own alienations by immersing itself in the fictive realities of the imaginary. The result, and this is Sartre's obsession, is "an act without action", "une singulière, l'imitation d'une Création qui n'a pas eu lieu" in what looks like a deliberate "Germanization" of his style, Sartre spangles the page with nouns and verb-complexes in upper case.

The writer exercises his moral authority and intellectual judgment on a terrain which all parties concerned know to be unreal, but whose seeming concreteness, whose seeming direction in time, give an illusion of significance and consequence. A "non-object" such as *Madame Bovary* is produced by and perpetuates a complicity of strategic illusions enforced on each other by the writer and society. The period 1852-70 was, argues Sartre, a unique, or at least privileged, phase of hypocrisy in euphuism, of illusions et once unveiled and sustained. Whatever his protestations to the contrary, protestations whose ambivalence Sartre dwells on with loving scorn, Flaubert will bitterly regret the collapse of the Second Empire. He was, even in a purist sense, its representative genius. He will manage to turn out only one book after the re-establishment of the Republic in September, 1871.

Though it is offered with a full-scale philosophy panoply couched in an opaque, increasingly Heideggerian idiom, Sartre's analysis is also, at many points, robustly old-fashioned. A central portion of the book consists of a comparison between the responses to the personal and political umbrage of Flaubert and Leconte de Lisle. The entire parallel is markedly in the vein of Sainte-Beuve, and there is nothing in Sartre's *explication de texte* of Leconte de Lisle's "Midi" which Lanson or Brunetière could object to. The very interesting account which Sartre puts forward of the reading habits and literary ambitions of the young men of the 1830s is, in the best sense, academic. There is nothing here of the pretentious jargon and Byzantine fastidiousness which have troubled French literary criticism over the past two decades. Sartre's sovereign indifference to the antics of Sollers and Foucault, no less than a work such as Pierre Barbéris's monumental *Enlèvement de la mort du siècle*, suggests that a phase of aberration is now passing. The point is one of seriousness and scruple in the face of a literary text.

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and those taking place in the consumer. Yet this distinction is impossible, because art is the meeting-point of these two experiences. It could of course be said that the producer's sublimation is active, outward directed, whereas the consumer's is passive, receptive. But the language of art, like all language, must contain both poles, if communication is to be established.

Yet, unlike language, the work of art remains in suspension outside the presence of its producer, and before the arrival of its consumer, like a message travelling between two distant partners. Nevertheless the object which is going to serve as a link between these two partners, this concentration of forces and forms, only comes to life if and when someone enjoys it. A temple buried in the sands, a painting kept in the vaults of a museum, a manuscript or a score thrown to the back of a drawer, are dead works. The consumer is as indispensable to the life of the work of art as the producer is to its birth. The consumer feeds his emotion into the work of art as he is enriched by it. The work of art is the point of intersection between artistic production and consumption. It also stands, as D. W. Winnicott has so eloquently shown, in the potential space between the outer and the inner world.

Producer and consumer both live in the outer world which is theirs. However private and personal their inner worlds are, a community of feelings must unite producer and consumer. The work of art is given a place in the outer world, but it does not belong to it—it fulfils none of the criteria of reality—neither does it belong to the inner world: it is not internal to the artist, were it only because he externalizes it. It deserves indeed the name of *transitional object* given by Winnicott. It is also an example of what Freud meant when he asserted that the sovereignty of a field of extra-territoriality where fantasy perpetuates the reign of the pleasure principle. Creation, and the aesthetic enjoyment which accompanies it through the identification of the consumer with the productive (reproductive, one might say) powers of the producer, flatters his omniscience. It reverses the power of illusion over the disillusion of our incapacity to subordinate the world to the laws of our desires. The work of art is a moment's-lapse in which producer and consumer enter into an emotional relationship. This communication can occur only if the producer's projection is paralleled by the consumer's introjection, the latter being (although not exclusively) what generates pleasure. This may also generate perplexity, anxiety, strangeness, fascination, or even aversion. A work of art fails if the only response to it is indifference.

But what is introjected here? The work of art, as we said above, implies an effort of work. Just as the drive is the measure of the work demand imposed upon the psychic system as a result of its links with the body, so the work done on the work of art is work on work, secondary work which brings into action the mechanisms of defence against drives, and the result of the satisfactions expressed through these. The work of art is then this mixed process of veiling and unveiling. This is the work the unconscious registers. The consumer retraces in his own living experience—in a much simplified form, no doubt—the footsteps of the producer. He follows the byways just as much as the roads which go straight to their goal and produce the desired effect. It may be that creativity lies in a faculty which is much more essential, much more primitive, and through which artistic creation emerges as a secondary or tertiary product.

Creativity is probably a manifestation of "aliveness", but what we are concerned with in creative activity is the form taken by this vital manifestation, the secret paths which it is compelled to follow, the means by which it arrives at the realized sophistication of the work of art. The more knowledgeable one is, the more one wants to know how it's done, and the more one knows how it's done, the more one wants to know how it's done.

But let there be no confusion—what one looks for is not the technical processes but the progression which allows these veiling-unveiling processes to operate together. A whole chain links producer and consumer—the producer's side, his masters (past or present), his peers; on the consumer's side, the critic, the other mediator, and the other consumers with whom he shares his pleasure.

But in order to achieve this pleasure and this knowledge, another dimension is needed which appeals less to representation and more to affective elements. To enjoy a work of art, it is necessary to share with its creator the state of primitive, formless chaos out of which it emerges, so to see it take shape at birth. The work of art may come into being and so that we in turn may come into being through it. What becomes apparent then is that the work is a double of the artist—but the strangest thing is that this double communicates with the person the work speaks to. Another dimension then emerges in this encounter. The work is not only a transitional object, it is a *transmutative* object; all the more so as this beautiful shape, this formal perfection, bears the marks of subjective idealization.

All the characteristics I have mentioned show the "linking" value of art. However, these general observations demand additional particularization for each branch of art. Beyond individual tastes and preferences, it appears undeniable that each art achieves its effect through different methods, and that this effect is not the same. What is there in common between the private pleasures of the reader of novels or poems, and that of the man who gazes at paintings, or of the theatre-goer? If it is difficult to say anything about the reader, who inhabits a totally private space, one can at least say that the crowds in museums appear fairly apathetic, indulging in no demonstrations either individual or collective. In the concert halls the religious silence of the listening crowd contrasts with the noisy explosion of clapping which allows the long-contained discharge. A major difference must lie in the fact of collective participation. This participation is even more evident in the theatre. The "house" breathes, vibrates, seems enfevered. Fainting is not uncommon, but there is no sleep or call to merriment.

Drama and hysteria are deeply linked. The hysteria is historic, the man of the theatre is historic (on account not only of his theatricality, but of many other factors, such as his capacity for identification). He needs his hysteria to be what he is, and communicate his emotion to the spectator's hysteria.

Tragedy and hysteria

These remarks naturally lead to the question of catharsis, all the more so as catharsis is connected with two names—Aristotle and Freud, the analysis of ancient tragedy and that of hysteria. Aristotle wrote his *Poetics* at a time when Greek tragedy had already died; Freud and Breuer invented the hypno-cathartic method at a time when psychoanalysis had not yet been born.

The definition of tragedy was closely linked with the notion of catharsis. In this definition, Aristotle insists on the fact that tragedy is imitation of action, that is, it must be enacted by characters; it is not enough to tell the tale. Plain recitation of the action in speech is not enough either. It must be served by all the tools of the trade (rhythm, melody, singing, alternation of speech and music, etc.) which are susceptible of inducing strong emotional response. It is this emotional induction which will allow the birth, the development, and finally the salutary catharsis of the two emotions arising from tragedy, terror or fear and pity. It has always been difficult to interpret catharsis accurately—sometimes as a purging, sometimes as a purifying of the passions. The physiological interpretation of catharsis, as a release of the

emotion, was not Aristotle's doctor's son?—contrasting with the mystical.

In fact nowadays it is seen more and more as homeopathic treatment, a sort of vaccination or immunization, the disease fighting the disease. What is sought is in fact to reach those who are susceptible to these two emotions and to cure them by inoculating them with an attenuated form of them. One seeks to disturb the soul while awakening the body, to provoke a liberating emotional discharge which frees the soul from its painful tensions, bringing the peace needed. Hence the paradox inherent in tragedy. The choice of a "noble" theme works towards the moral, mystical effect; such a subject sends the soul soaring to celestial heights. But this story is served with a "seasoning": Aristotle's own term of all the lyrical resources of language and music. The rhythmic and melodic elements are the active ferment of catharsis, which mobilize emotion. It is clear that what we have said of catharsis echoes what we have mentioned about sublimation: its devaluation through the choice of a "noble" theme, its goal-inhibition which allows only partial discharge of tension, its displacement of the object (the tragedy instead of the sexual object).

And, on the subject of sexual desire with which it has been associated—does it not lead to fade away in the final catharsis?—a final question goes forward under the regulated conditions. Many respects well noted to allow, through hypnosis, development of blocked emotion, to enable a fully, but this time within a patient situation, in order to free him from his past. It later became clear that to go much further, to let the develop in order to allow a series of "scenes" stress, the balance of stage, the sets, the costumes (it is common for producers to award prizes to actors, to echo the of painters); and, finally, the of the present not only in the of singing and music but also of dancing, as represented movements of the chorus. We meet the three kinds of on which the unconscious of language, thing representation.

The great paradox of Freud of 1920 will be a miracle if works when a to extract pleasure from emotions. This triumph of nature principle shows the of reversal in the end drives. Functioning at a tragic action releases us from making us attend to the

of the word is at its maximum. Seen from the other, the work of art arouses an emotion which is as close as possible, bearing in mind the demands of sublimation to the release of "natural" emotions.

This maximal cathartic effect probably arises from the multiplicity of registers in which tragedy functions: but Aristotle may have been right in stressing the part played by the musical "seasoning", for music must be the art which most directly mobilizes our emotions: that is, which is most susceptible of occasioning the greatest release of tension. To get an idea of what catharsis might have been for the ancients, we might have to look nowadays at opera, where enthusiasm and passion still retain that popular vein which one will find nowhere else. We see at work, combined with all the spell-binding power of lyric art, that collective electric charge in which the catharsis of each spectator is enriched by the potential catharsis of the others. The group identification of the spectators carries each individual emotion to be heightened by collective participation within a common reference to the object of the spectacle as incarnated in the voice of the singer. The greater the quality of audience silence, the fuller the release of passions at the

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close of the piece, whether in admiration or condemnation. It sometimes feels like the bull-ring, or a discharge does not occur in reading. It is present, but in an attenuated, contained form; probably all the more as literature appeals to the intellect and to representation more than to the affective element. The whole of the distance separating the novel from the poem. One could thus draw a *catharsis line* from language to the affective, from the literary to the musical element.

Classical Greek tragedy lasted only about fifty years, and is dead. This total art has split up into its component parts, giving rise to specialized art forms. True, Shakespeare could reverse the power of music through the sheer virtue of his verse, making each tragedy into a symphony. And if French classical tragedy still owes anything to music, to such an extent that Racine is even more untranslatable than Shakespeare, what takes place on the stage is frozen lyricism. Romantic drama attempted to pick up again the link with the lost lyricism, but the movement which banished music from the stage was irreversible. It may be as a reaction against such ossification of speech that the revival noticeable in contemporary theatre claims Antonin Artaud as its master. His long solitary struggle aimed at re-establishing the rights of the body on the stage as among the audience, to flesh out performance once more: flesh and blood quivering, suffering, enjoying. It may be useful to recall that Artaud was above all impressed by the Balinese drama, which blends singing, dancing, and mime. Artaud's affective drama pushes the spectacle to the limits of the bearable: a drama of the single performance, a drama of the happening, beside Brecht's didactic theatre, which aims through alienation at an almost opposite effect, beside the intellectual theatre in which contemporary English dramatists are a major force, we see the increasing growth of a theatre born of Artaud's research. There speech becomes a howl, a shout. The intelligibility of the text is second, by a long way, to the attempt at emotional mobilization. It may go so far as to make the text deliberately incomprehensible. When hermeneutics has been tried, a mixture of dead languages is the next resort, if indeed a new language is not invented for the purpose as in T. S. Eliot's *Unlabeled*. This effort belongs in a line of preoccupation which is not limited to drama or to the theatre, but which is that of the whole of art, in its state of anti-intellectualist revolt.

We are consequently witnessing a return of catharsis, contemporary neo-catharsis, but with a profoundly different meaning: for what is sought is no longer the purging, the timing, the overpowering of passion, were it even by arousing it. It is rather the awakening of a sleeping body—given that it is not indeed dead yet—the reviving violence and vitality once stifled inside it. Neo-catharsis strives after a re-injection of drive into the work of art; it

endows it again with the sexual and aggressive potential of which classical art attempted to show only glimpses. It puts the work of art back among the direct objects of the drive. It aims at a release as complete as possible.

In a way, Aristotle and Freud were pursuing the same aim. The release of tension they were attempting to identify was based on an ideal balance: not so much opposing the Apollonian to the Dionysiac, to take Nietzsche's favourite distinction, but keeping them together, making them coexist, whether alternately or simultaneously. The disturbing of this balance in favour of intellectualism has authorized the moderns to substitute its extreme opposite. Contemporary neo-catharsis is derived not from Freud, but from Reich. The whole system of differences established above is progressively crumbling; barriers between language and emotion, between representation and affect, between private and public space, between the theatre and the street, between desire and reality, between producer and consumer, are falling—this return to the Dionysiac makes contemporary neo-catharsis the opposite of classical catharsis.

It is indeed not unexpected that such a movement should also be characterized by its rejection of psychoanalysis, which it appears at first sight to be derived from. It rejects its acknowledgement of one limitation, of the ineliminability of the super-ego, of the inevitable boundaries set to our enjoyment and our omnipotence. As for centuries we, apparently, ignored deliberately the role of desire, the present cultural movement seems now to hint out everything that is not desire. No one can foresee where the future lies. Our reservations when faced with novelty may be no more than the preoccupations of a dying era. Many things perish in the torrent of neo-catharsis. Why our resistance? A refusal to abandon reason? But we know that the role of reason is often to invent reasons which serve our desires. What seems to me most difficult to accept in this revolt is finally the denial of intra-psychic conflict; the rejection of contradictory tensions: renunciation, love and hate, tenderness and violence, intellect and affect, solitude and communion, illusion and disillusion...

While we are asked to join in this attempt at total liberation, we cannot forget that the distributive system of the emotions rests on this contradictory tension, which does not slacken even in love, between the love for ourselves and the love directed at the object, as well as between the love and the hate alternately inspired in us by this object. Between it and its slanders the work of art, at this crossroads where we can meet because it bears in it the same contradictions but resides in a territory that belongs to no one.

André Green is a psychoanalyst in Paris and the author of *Un œil en trop*, a psychoanalytical study of Greek myth.

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Lying and laying

CANT: Les exploits galants du baron de Crac 178pp. Paris: Pauvert. 17.50fr.

Pierre Cami was a humorist, a writer of comic and subversive songs, novels, sketches and film-scripts, who died in 1958. At least between the wars, he seems to have been widely read and enjoyed in France and had some intellectually very respectable supporters. Later he was sufficiently forgotten to call for rediscovery, and *Les exploits galants du baron de Crac* is the sixth of his more than forty books to have been reissued by the happily revived house of Pauvert, which has plans to bring out many more.

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Miltonic mountain

A. S. P. WIDDOWSON and DOUGLAS BUSH
A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton
Volume 2: The Minor English Poems.
Part One: 138pp., £3.
Part Two: pp.139-734, £6.
Part Three: pp.735-1,141, £6.
Routledge and Kegan Paul, £14.50 the set.

The appearance of the *Variorum Commentary* on Milton's minor English poems is an event that has been long awaited. It is also an event of the expected magnitude. The volume was two decades in the making. Begun by Canada's leading Miltonist A. S. P. Widdowson, it was completed after his death by the dean of seventeenth-century scholars, Douglas Bush. Even if we leave out Christian Weyssenhof's eighty-page study of verse form in the minor English poems, almost a thousand pages of commentary are needed for poems which in the 1673 edition occupy no more than 160 pages. Such figures remind us that a collection which includes *Comus* and *Lycidas* is scarcely to be described as minor poetry. But the figures require the reassurance that what is amassed here is not mountainous simply because it is mindless. One has to read only the twenty-seven pages on the "two-handled engine" in *Lycidas* to realize how much has been said and at how much greater length it could have been said.

Comment on the commentary is a reviewer's obligation, but though the task may be called for by convention its results are likely to be premature. The *Variorum* will be justified not only by what it is but what it does. Now that the Milton scholar has every analogue and every interpretation of every crux at his fingertips, his responsibility is to learn how to use them to guide himself more deeply into the poems. He must extract enlightenment rather than bewilderment from the profusion of possibilities. Perhaps it is expecting too much to ask him to add postscripts to those possibilities, but consolidation rather than incremental knowledge is needed. It is more important to ascertain what the mountain means—and to dispel the irrelevant suspicion that it may not mean anything—than to add, at this stage, to the mountain itself.

Quarrel over detail with the *Variorum* are not impossible, but to involve oneself in them is to respond less than adequately to the

scale and weight of the work. Some matters of principle can be profitably taken up. The *Variorum* takes the Columbia text for granted, and the commentary on the Latin poems has left relatively open the question of how the editors would respond when textual changes had aesthetic consequences. The present volume wisely deals with all such variants—a decision of particular importance for *Comus* and *Lycidas*, which are heavily worked over in the Trinity manuscript. Less satisfying is the way the *Variorum* handles commentary on the principal minor poems. The way chosen is an article-by-article summary in the order of publication. This sixty writers on *Lycidas* are reduced to their essentials in eighty pages. It is a feat of condensation for which readers must be grateful; the summaries themselves are so judicious that even the authors could not improve upon them. The organization moreover holds out the alluring prospect of future supplements to the commentary. But the reader looking for information on the discussions in *Lycidas*, or on the "real subject" of the poem, or on the nature of the oppositions around which the poem is built would have no alternative but to read all eighty pages. The exercise would undoubtedly be good for his health and is less than he would have to do without the *Variorum*. But it does seem a pity that Professor Bush, who now knows the subject better than any mortal, should deprive us of his guidance in acquiring an overall view.

Literary scholarship can engross itself in examining the connections of a work to other works in the literature, to works in other literatures, to discursive works, and, increasingly, to cultural accomplishments in areas other than literature. It is sometimes reticent in making what would seem the most obvious connection of all—the linking of a work to other works by the same author. Lines 123-4 of the "Nativity Ode" can be referred to the Scriptures, to David and to *Psalms* Lvi, vi, 89-90, via Verity but not to Job, 21:1-17, a detail which not only joins the two poems but divides how scrupulously and consistently the tonal difference between the poems is maintained. In lines 161-62 of *Lycidas*, the quarrel mount is surely suggestive of Paradise as well as of Camden, Richard, Carey, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton and the atlas of Mercurator and Ortelius. The *Variorum* is of course a compilation of commentary rather than an attempt to add to it or to fill in its omissions. In pointing to what it does not fully

do one simply points to what the rest of us could be doing. That we should have something left to do is important. In dealing with an achievement as impressive as the *Variorum*, the first response is to retreat chastened and to ask ourselves if a total "possession" of it is indeed possible. We can then remember Mark Pattison's remark that an appreciation of Milton is the last reward of consummate scholarship; and since the scholarship has been conveniently consummated we can ask ourselves how the appreciation has been altered.

Opening the book not entirely at random we can consider the first lines of Milton's Ninth Sonnet:

Lady that in the prime of earliest youth,
Widely both shunned the highway
and the green,
The *Variorum* quotes Matthew, vii, 13-14, here, passing by the evocation of Virgil, *Paradise Lost*, i, 301-5, activates the Virgilian remembrance and reminds us how the alternatives gently put before us in the sonnet are built into the estuary of the larger undertaking. But neither *Paradise Lost* nor Virgil nor the Bible describes the way down as "green" and the suggestion (which the *Variorum* provides without comment) that Milton may have derived this epithet from an enormous recollection of Chaucer by Ascham will not pass muster. Green is the colour of life and growth and it is because Milton is not bereft at the paradoxical intelligence that he associates it with death and sterility. Moreover the discrimination called for between appearance and reality gives weight to "wisely" and endows yet another paradox, latent in "the prime of earliest youth."

There is another meaning for "prime," aptly cited by the editors: but this, as we can now see, recedes into the background of the verbal interplay. The hill of truth which follows can be linked to Hesiod and Donne, but attention needs to be drawn to the progress up the hill in the sonnet, the even movement "in widest measure" of the mind committed in its destiny versus Donne's wrenching remembrance, the sudden encounter with the hill's actuality and the virtual taking of the summit by assault. There can be more than one way of inheriting tradition and each way is proper to the poem it animates. To chart these affinities and discriminations may be the business of the critic rather than the scholar; it one barely insists on distinguishing the two functions. But it is a business that is still worthwhile on the basis of what the *Variorum* offers in such abundance.

The baroque existentialist

RALPH BERRY:
The Act of John Webster
174pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press, £3.75.

Ralph Berry's main thesis is that Webster was a baroque dramatist: one who depicted extreme states of emotion, who believed in naturalism and who was "obsessed with death and the flux of time." Such a description could be applied to Ford, Toomer, and Shakespeare, and indeed to dramatists and poets of different epochs. Tragic writers, as Massfield once wrote, are concerned with "the agony and exaltation of dreadful acts," and poets from Ovid to Eliot have been obsessively concerned with "injurious Time." Analogies from art history are not necessarily dangerous, and the philologist Webster is likely to have seen no relation in his plays. Yet Mr Berry argues persuasively and some of his quotations from art-historians will have been written about *The White Devil*.

Mr Berry's other thesis is that Webster was an existentialist who believed that a man is defined by his actions, "including his mode of dying," that he lives in a godless universe, and that his relationship with

that universe is absurd. Here, perhaps, Mr Berry has assumed too readily that Webster's opinions coincided with those of his characters, whether good or evil. Bosola speaks of "this gloomy world" in which "wretched and fearful mankind live" and he describes for the Docheas the wearisome condition of humanity:

Their life, a general mist of error,
Their death, a hideous storm of terror.
Flamineo, when he dies, is given a memorable couplet:

This busy trade of life appears most vain,
Since rest breeds rest, when all seek pain by pain.

But Bosola and Flamineo are both villains—even though Bosola is particularly converted by the Docheas's bitter description of the pleasure of sleep: "only the good hours of anion may be explained by the situation of his life and children. In the same way it is now generally admitted that we should not take Gloucester's 'As desired opinion, and still less as Shakespeare.' The horrible corruption of the world, and particularly of the

court, which is the dominating impression we get from Webster's tragedies, is not incompatible with Christianity, as the poems of Greville and the sermons of Donne serve to show. Mr Berry himself quotes some lines from *The White Devil* to show that Spenser shared Webster's views of death, and no one has suspected Spenser of atheism.

The most interesting parts of *The Act of John Webster* are those concerned with *The Devil's Law-Case* and with the imagery of the three plays with which Mr Berry deals. The imagery is given the full Spenserian treatment and this contains more impressive accounts of the atmosphere of the plays.

A number of queries remain. Is it true that in *The Duchess of Malfi* there is a "revelation of humanity rather than evil-doers gripped by indifference"? Is there a broad structural similarity of that play with *King Lear*? Should one speak of the "sin of the Duchess," "damned by the imagery," "in ambition, the hamlet of the modest and hesitant Antonio"? Was Bosola, who took so long to find out the identity of the Duchess's husband, a "competent

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Rock to riches

JERRY HOPKINS:
Elvis: A Biography
448pp plus unnumbered plates. Macmillan: Open Gate. £1.95.

A recent publicity photograph of Elvis Presley shows him at Madison Square Garden, decked in flared and bejewelled bolero suit. A lucky—or is he a second?—removes the ceremonial cape. In one hand the cabaret superstar holds a symbolically restorative glass of water; in the other, that most essential of props, the casually hand-held microphone. All this is a long way from rockabilly music in Memphis.

At this and similar set-pieces discussed in Jerry Hopkins's biography the audience is now mainly middle-aged, predominantly female. The repertoire is all-American—over-orchestrated ball-ads and toned-down, camped-up versions of hard rockers from the mid-1950s. The title implicitly at stake is that vacated by Frank Sinatra, and the financial implications are that Presley will hold it for as long as he cares to.

Mr Hopkins shows that this potential for mass success was cultivated from the very beginning, despite the mean facade and the pelvic gyrations that outraged *The New York Times* and Northern television audiences, used to musical pup on the Ed Sullivan and Dorsey Brothers shows. The appearance of rebellion—delinquency, even—was misleading and contrived, and Presley's insouciant and social deviations were ultimately mild enough to become acceptable to middle America, that stratum from which are drawn fan club orga-

nizers and souvenir addicts, conservative owners. Presley's own early comments at press conferences on topics like sex and dating were calculatedly inexplicit. It was also lucky for him that he happened to be both genuinely devoted to his mother and to the socially acceptable pursuits of buying big cars and giving the right donations to respectable charities. Unlike some of the superstars who followed him, he had no interest whatsoever in politics.

Dollars are a predictable and munificent factor in the story, which often reads like the creation, promotion and marketing of a branded product called Elvis Presley by Colonel Tom Parker. Remarkably, Parker achieved all this through an uncanny keen scent for a fast buck rather than through any entrepreneurial innovations. His was the style of the Southern huckster who asks a great deal and gives very little in return—\$25,000, for instance, to vet the script for one of Presley's quite appalling films. Usually he got what he wanted. His protégé was unprecedentedly popular; and the Colonel was old-fashioned enough to play the market to his limit.

Mr Hopkins is good on business details but much else in his book is long-winded and too gossipy, and there is very little about the music, the best of which does deserve close consideration. Exactly why Presley—and not Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, or Conway Twitty, even—was able to cash in so mammothly on the revolution in popular music is a good question, and Mr Hopkins does not come to terms with it.

Sound barriers

ROY DOUGLAS:
Working with R.V.W.
48pp. Oxford University Press.
Paperback, 80p.

Composers and conductors became adept in reading full orchestral scores, acquiring the ability to hear them mentally and to get some impression of their artistic world. But some composers like to check their mental image against the actual sound of a live performance. For some it is enough to use a piano, but in a big, fully scored work it is desirable to hear not only the orchestral colouring but also the internal balance of tone. A music publisher in preparing a manuscript for the printer, photographer or engraver, has to check not only for wrong notes but also for missing time and key signatures, changes and restoration of clefs, and similar small textual details. There is a further source of possible error to be checked in copying out of hand parts. For the last fourteen years of Vaughan Williams's life he was served by Roy Douglas in the business of getting the works of his imagination translated into the living sound of their

first performance through this fourfold obstacle race—for Vaughan Williams's handwriting and brutal ill treatment of his manuscripts with pocket knife and adhesives constituted still another hurdle to be cleared. In this small book Mr Douglas tells us what he did and how he did it. This is of considerable technical interest, but there emerge from the narrative interests of another kind, psychological and human. Not all composers' minds work alike, but here is a fully-documented account of how slugs by stage one composer created his symphonies, cantatas, and occasional work; here, too, is the mokest account of how collaboration ripened into friendship and how this friendship benefited the musical community, composer, publisher, copyist, orchestral players and the rest of us. Mr Douglas is scrupulously in describing and defining his relation not only to the composer but also to his music, rebelling the mischievous idea that he was responsible for its orchestration and saying exactly how far his responsibility went for the posthumous nativity play, *The First Nowell*. It is a heart-warming account of a highly technical achievement.

Success story

PEGGY HOLROYDE:
Indian Music
291pp. Allen and Unwin. £5.25.

This is the book on Indian music that the general public has been waiting for. Peggy Holroyde is an enthusiast, and an informed enthusiast. She has done all that can be done to give a good yet fairly short account of a music which almost defies such treatment, so varied, deep, everlasting and temporary it is. A music dealing particularly in paradoxes is very difficult to put over in print; and eventually, if and when Western musicians and music lovers come to know and feel the basic realities and grammar of Indian music, the time will be ripe for books about this or that group of ragas, etc.

A major music is a mirror to the world; and the sort of reflector of

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Mirrors of reality

G. L. BURSILL-HALL:
*Speculative Grammars of the Middle
Ages*
424pp. Mouton. Distributed by C. L.
Libri, PO Box 482, The Hague, 7001.

THOMAS OF ERFURT:
Grammatica Speculativa
Edited and translated by G. L.
Bursill-Hall
340pp. £5.50.

First Grammatical Treatise
Translated and edited by Einar
Haugen
83pp plus 14 plates. £2.75.
Longman.

The volumes by G. L. Bursill-Hall are published in two interesting and important new series: the general account of speculative grammars appears in a collection called "Approaches to Semiotics", designed to accommodate hitherto neglected contributions to the theory of signs, which first began publication in 1969, while the edition of Thomas of Erfurt's grammar is one of the first four volumes, all of which were recently issued, in a series of editions of works of major importance in the history of linguistics, called "The Classics of Linguistics". The account of speculative grammars is appropriate to a series on semiotics, since in such grammars linguistic categories were based on "modes of signifying"; Thomas of Erfurt rightly takes his place among "classical" linguists as not only the last creative thinker in his particular "school" of linguistics but indubitably the greatest of them all.

Both volumes are valuable to the English-speaking student of linguistics (as well as to others), many graduate schools now offer courses in the history of linguistics, but until recently large-scale commentaries have appeared mainly in German, French, Italian and Dutch; and apart from R. H. Robins's pioneering monograph in 1951, and the relevant sections in general works, there has been little for the English monoglot to read on medieval grammar, either of commentary or of translation. The study of the history of the discipline is as much antiquarian pursuit; it is justified not only by its intrinsic interest but also, in the case of speculative grammar, by the fact that it sets in historical perspective the current division between theory and data-oriented approaches to the study of language in a most illuminating manner.

Professor Bursill-Hall is to be congratulated on his detailed and lucid treatment of a difficult subject. *Speculative Grammars* is an account, based on published texts, of the late medieval "modistic" grammars, which attempted to relate the

traditional "parts of speech" to postulated categories of reality, describing those categories, regarded as universal, with reference to the grammar of Latin. Syntax is treated in an entirely original manner, but phonetics and phonemics are totally ignored. Professor Bursill-Hall describes the pre-modistic linguistic tradition, clarifies where possible the sources of modistic grammar, and adds some fifty-five pages of appendices in tabular form, as well as a comprehensive bibliography and index.

Unfortunately, he does not always remember how unfamiliar a subject this is to most readers, and he could perhaps be more precise in defining and using terms. For example, definition of "speculative" is delayed, in one volume, until page 31, and in the other is not provided at all. Yet it is a key term, meaning not only "philosophical" but, more precisely, "theoretical" (being opposed, in medieval grammars, to "practical") and, more precisely still, occurring as a derivative of *speculum* (mirror): the categories of language being regarded as "mirrors" of reality. Another key term which deserves explanation is *Speculholog*, used to refer to speculative grammar. Medieval "linguistic logic" as conceived, for example, by Peter of Spain, was quite different from the speculative grammars based on the "modes of signifying" and although there are many precedents for using the terms interchangeably, it would have helped the non-specialist if Professor Bursill-Hall had kept them apart and, if possible, given a brief description of the major differences between the two approaches to language.

Furthermore, while we are quite properly reminded that "a theoretical account of language is the product of its intellectual background" (which includes contemporary metaphysics) it is to be regretted that, instead of referring to metaphysical theories only in passing, where they are relevant to the definition of a grammatical category, Professor Bursill-Hall has not provided us with a coherent whole. This is, of course, asking for a great deal; but space might have been found by pruning the lengthy footnotes which betray the thesis origin of this work.

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Explaining Enoch

IVOR BROWN:
A Chronology of Names
159pp. Bodley Head. £4.50.

In this, the twelfth of his word-books, Ivor Brown turns his attention to given-names used to be called *Christliao*-names. In the well-graced causeries or mini-essays that we have learnt to expect from him he now expatiates on the meanings of such names, on the changing fashions in them, and, particularly, on the individuals, both real and fictitious, who have borne them, with perhaps somewhat excessive reference to the denizens of slugs and screens.

For a concrete example let us consider his treatment of Enoch: starting with the biblical patriarch, he broadens out to sketch in the lineaments of four other very different Enochs—Bennet, Powell, Arden, and Somers. This is a technique that is bound at times to turn up good things, such as his suggestion that

whereas Harold was all right for Macmillan it does not really suit Wilson, and that while Roy is a positive handicap to Jenkins, Ted is a considerable asset to Heath.

As in his preceding volumes, Mr Brown unfolds the freight of a well-stored mind, and on occasions produces a good story, as of J. C. Squire's *New Statesman* footnote to the printer who had erroneously substituted *Hernia* for *Hermia* in his account of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "I cannot (he wrote) bring myself to interfere with my printer's first fine careless rapture."

Naturally one does not agree with all Mr Brown's findings; his suggestion that St Christopher's being the patron saint of travellers has something to do with Columbus misses a more modern and early connection: his association of the term "proper Charles" with Mr. Chaplin evades its more derogatory origin in rhyming slang; and surely the Jenny that Jesus, Leigh Hunt, and Mrs.

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All he has to say, though, on the sad decrease of flower and jewel names for girls is greatly to the point, and so is his pointing of the paradox that, with the decline of religious belief, the more popular seem to become such biblical names as Mark, Adam, and Timothy. In his foreword Mr Brown describes this as his final addition to these volumes. We hope he exaggerates.

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The superstition
of technique

BY MARIO LUZI

ing something that goes against the principle of nature.

For all this, the fascination of the scribe absorbed with his paper and his signs is still the chosen slave for which the writer longs when, by an arbitrary desire, he fancies he can rectify his own destiny; but he cannot escape constant contact with the dark creative process of the world — indeed, he himself is immersed in it. Naturally he would feel idly situated, and catch to perfection in the coded message of the universe, yet he is also concerned for the fate of life, which makes him to decode it. He may find in the universe by eliminating his own self, but this will not satisfy him; knowledge gained outside the process of understanding itself is acceptable either. It seems as if, between the aesthetic and all the other moments of life, there will arise a further synthesis, one that will language up in an ivory tower, but leave it open to the events that form the inner laws of life: there is no point in producing something that goes against the principle of nature.

proof against erosion or capable of yielding a sap without impurities, in which the meaning of every event is magically imprisoned. . . . Many have had such a dream, but anyone who mistakes it for reality is lost. One of the causes of his occasional revival is a mistake about the nature and powers of poetry; a mistake due, we may suppose, to frustration and at the same time to pride. Alienated or repelled by the violent, contradictory play of the world's forces (as so often happens, both individually and collectively), the artist seeks a refuge and demands revenge and thinks he can find both in his own private demigore. In such circumstances, he deludes himself that he has a kingdom all his own in which to exercise absolute power, and looks upon technique as a transcendental support. Of course, there is no need to connect this displacement of the creative axis with a state of unconscious frivolity; we can all think of instances in which it has had a sacrificial aspect. But there can be no doubt at all that technique, an absolute, and even consider it in advance as an end and solution, is an alibi; it alleviates and at the same time diminishes the drama of poetic creation, without, obviously, resolving it. Indeed it very often makes it worse.

But does this legendary thing called technique really exist? Does it, I mean, exist as something definite and "in itself", within the ambit of which it is possible to concentrate the will to act and to transform? Technique is a way of working on the raw materials. But what raw materials, and supplied by whom? The image of an enclosed universe in which the individual writer is allowed only to combine its component parts in new ways is a popular one, but it is based on the presupposition that there is no contact at all between the world of writing and the world of nature and of existence.

This presupposition goes, I believe, against the first principle of poetry, which is, within the order of language, to invent a *parole* where there was formerly a sign or cipher (even if it is only the some *parole* that has declined into a conventional sign or cipher), in other words to bring out the spirit, instead of the letter. By catching the spirit that lies beyond the letter, poetry gives language room again in which to adventure, in harmony with the other forces at work in the unbroken process of creation. In this sense, the language of poetry is profoundly natural, since it breaks up the established language of culture and plunges its sinews into the one element capable of reactivating it and opening it up to further meanings: that is, into the depths where metamorphosis, which is the very law of nature itself, is at work. All programmatic attempts at linguistic innovation are unimportant compared with what happens of necessity in the creative process of poetry, when the word dies to many of its meanings and is born again to other possible meanings, and where all that is said is said over the ashes of what has become useless. To compare this with another kind of relationship very close to it: the ideological revolution is merely a shortened version of, and quite extrinsic to, a very different form of upheaval perpetually taking place in the world. In other words, the avant-garde and revolution are episodes for the most part unaware of events respectively and jointly

much deeper than themselves, events they dramatize and make explicit. The poet is touched by the avant-garde and by revolution but he will not go far unless, in his turn, he touches the depths from which they arise; and to do this he merely needs to recall the sense of creation in action, of which poetry itself is a voice and an image.

As for technique, that is probably a question of another metaphor, only this time without a precise object, unless we want to postulate a science half derived from tradition and subjected to infinite modifications. Let us try to see what kind of applied science this might be. What would it answer to? A particular skill in tuning an ocellar harp would be mere scrupulous craftsmanship unless one had a wind to blow through its strings. This means simply that the technique of poetry is not the result of a technical operation: it is simply the effect of the degree of precision with which the internal movement of invention is regulated. To put technique and emotion in the two parts of the scales is not, I think, rigorous enough; indeed, if we want what we say to retain any rigour at all, it is meaningless.

Auden, in his characteristically intelligent remarks on Ariel and Caliban, recommends the choice, under the sign of the elf, of the tightness and grace of play as against the more serious demands advanced by the poet's own presumption at the intrusion on him of authority in all its forms. His well-known disillusion, both in his life and his philosophy, can be seen in that choice. He is also wholly in line with his age in making it. What he says is an answer to his own past and to the many false problems that, with unnecessary seriousness, assail the literary world. But, beyond polemics and mockery, Auden is in fact carrying out a sacred task of liberation. Poetry uses this sort of cunning to protect its own authenticity; it does not shun these erudite invitations to the play of invention, to the art of discovery and to the devices of artifice. By thus defending its own eternal childlike aspect it may assume the impudent aspect of irresponsibility or affect the triumphant colours of a fireworks display. But it would be ingenuous to believe that it deludes purely agonistically in technique. What Auden is really doing is to dissociate himself from the destiny of today's world, which is controlled by attitudes far from his own and therefore unacceptable. In this he is judging the world more subtly and more thoughtfully than if he were to condemn it outright.

Irony, in fact, is still an emotion. Looked at from near to, the possible responses to the world's injustices are limited. When a saga of cultural maturity bordering on saturation has been reached, when the lens has been moved but the point of view has become more complex, then injustice may cease to strike one as such; and may seem, instead, mere absurdity and nonsense. The poet, in this phase of civilization, may come to express feelings that are less direct and "wild" altered as they are through his understanding of many disenchantments. It is also possible that his awareness of the many compelling ways of acquiring knowledge — which have stripped poetry of its

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The superstition
of technique

BY MARIO LUZI

proof against erosion or capable of yielding a sap without impurities, in which the meaning of every event is magically imprisoned. . . . Many have had such a dream, but anyone who mistakes it for reality is lost. One of the causes of his occasional revival is a mistake about the nature and powers of poetry; a mistake due, we may suppose, to frustration and at the same time to pride. Alienated or repelled by the violent, contradictory play of the world's forces (as so often happens, both individually and collectively), the artist seeks a refuge and demands revenge and thinks he can find both in his own private lemurage. In such circumstances, he deludes himself that he has a kingdom all his own in which to exercise absolute power, and looks upon technique as a transcendental support. Of course, there is no need to connect this displacement of the creative act with a state of unconscious frivolity; we can all think of instances in which it has had a sacrificial aspect. But there can be no doubt at all that to make technique an absolute, and even consider it in advance as an end and solution, is an alibi; it alleviates and at the same time diminishes the drama of poetic creation, without, obviously, resolving it. Indeed it very often makes it worse.

But does this legendary technique exist? Does it, I mean, exist as something definite and "in itself", within the ambit of which it is possible to concentrate the will to act and to transform? Technique is a way of working on the raw materials. But what raw materials, and supplied by whom? The image of an enclosed universe in which the individual writer is allowed only to combine his component parts in new ways is a popular one, but it is based on the presupposition that there is no conflict at all between the world of writing and the world of nature and of existence. This presupposition goes, I believe, against the first principle of poetry, which is, within the order of language, to invent a *parole* where there was formerly no sign or elpher (even if it is only the same *parole* that has declined into a conventional sign or elpher), in other words to bring out the spirit, instead of the letter. By catching the spirit that lies beyond the letter, poetry gives language room again in which to adventure, in harmony with the other forces at work in the unbroken process of creation. In this sense, the language of poetry is profoundly natural, since it breaks up the established language of culture and plunges its snows into the one element capable of reactivation: it opens it up to further meanings: that is, into the depths where metamorphosis, which is the very law of nature itself, is at work. All programmatic attempts at linguistic innovation are unimportant compared with what happens of necessity in the creative process of poetry, when the word dies to many of its meanings and is born again to other possible meanings, and where all that is said is said over the ashes of what has become useless. To compare this with another kind of relationship very close to it: the ideological revolution is merely a shortened version of, and quite extrinsic to, a very different form of upheaval perpetually taking place in the world. In other words, the avant-garde and revolution are episodes for the most part unaware of events respectively and jointly

much deeper than themselves, events they dramatize and make explicit. The poet is touched by the avant-garde not by revolution but by will not go far unless, in his turn, he touches the depths from which they arise: and to do this he merely needs to recall the sense of creation in action, of which poetry itself is a voice and an image.

As for technique, that is probably a question of another metaphor, only this time without a precise object, unless we want to postulate a science half derived from tradition and subjected to infinite modifications. Let us try to see what kind of applied science this might be. What would it answer to? A particular skill in tuning an ocelot harp would be mere scrupulous craftsmanship unless one had a wind to blow through its strings. This means simply that the technique of poetry is not the result of a technical operation: it is simply the effect of the degree of precision with which the internal movement of invention is regulated. To put technique and emotion in the two pans of the scales is not, I think, rigorous enough; indeed, if we want what we say to retain any rigour at all, it is meaningless.

Auden, in his characteristically intelligent remarks on Ariel and Calliban, recommends the choice, under the sign of the cliff, of the lightness and grace of play as against the more serious demands advanced by the poet's own presumption or the intrusion on him of authority in all its forms. His well-known disillusion, both in his life and his philosophy, can be seen in that choice. He is also wholly in line with his age in making it. What he says is an answer to his own past and to the many false problems that, with unnecessary seriousness, assail the literary world. But, beyond polemics and mockery, Auden is to be fact carrying out a sacred task of liberation. Poetry uses this sort of cunning to protect its own authenticity; it does not shun these crudit invitations to the play of invention, to the art of discovery and to the devices of artifice. By thus defending its own eternal childhood it may assume the imperious aspect of irresponsibility or affect the triumphal colours of a fireworks display. But it would be ludicrous to believe that it delights purely apocryphally to technique. What Auden is really doing is to dissociate himself from the destiny of today's world, which is controlled by attitudes far from his own and therefore unacceptable. In this he is judging the world more subtly and more thoughtfully than if he were to condemn it outright.

Irony, in fact, is still an emotion. Looked at from near to, the possible responses to the world's injustices are limited. When a stage of cultural maturity bordering on saturation has been reached, when the lens has not been moved but the point of view has become more complex, then injustice may cease to strike one as such and may seem, instead, mere absurdity and nonsense. The poet, in this phase of civilization, may come to express feelings that are less direct and "wild" filtered as they are through his understanding of many disenchantsments. It is also possible that his awareness of the many competing ways of acquiring knowledge—which have stripped poetry of its



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1941-1945
Walter R. Roberts.

Rutgers University Press. £7.50

This book is an account of the relations during World War II between the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union on the one hand and the resistance forces inside Yugoslavia on the other. International and national rivalries competed with political and military considerations to create a situation of incredible complexity, confusion, and cross-purposes.

Fetter & Simons Inc.,
51 Weymouth Street,
London, W1N 3LE

Brecht here delivers himself of a characteristic maxim which Benjamin repeats in his diary: "We must start not from the good old days, but from the bad new ones."

The "bad new ones" entail a mass age which must be respected as such. Correspondingly, in art the time is no longer for the "slow narrative", the "rich inner life", for "placing the individual at the centre of events" (Lukács's requirement). "Man will become man again," says Brecht, "not by leaving the mass but by entering into it. The mass exists off its dehumanization, and man becomes man once again *but not as the man he was before*" (italics added). From this standpoint Lukács's prescriptions about individual characterization appear to Brecht static and unhistorical, dependent upon a fixed, high-hourgeois concept of the "all-round" man. From the same standpoint Brecht questions Lukács's category of the "typical", asking for its redefinition as the "historically significant"; for otherwise, he argues, we should merely inherit a "Valhalla of lasting figures" (which is how Brecht describes Lukács's series of types "from Antigone to Nekhlyudov"—adding impishly after every mention of Tolstoy's Nekhlyudov: "whoever he may be"). The individuality of Balzac's characters, Brecht points out, depends not on their formal "typicality" but on the monstrous competitiveness of early French capitalism in which Balzac took part.

Lukács of course takes this into account, but he puts his emphasis elsewhere. He claims that Balzac's characters "fully embody" the contradictions of their epoch. Thereby he subordinates the "monstrous competitiveness" to the aesthetic category of the "type". Next, he discovers a cleavage between Balzac's reactionary politics and his realistic (progressive) writing and argues that the latter transcends the former. Brecht, by contrast, considered Balzac, who accumulated detail (and characters) as lustily as his insurers amassed wealth (and mistresses), to be the very "type" of the capitalist-entrepreneurial writer.

"To know about literary forms," Brecht insists, "one must question reality, not aesthetics, not even the aesthetics of realism." Nor should the concept of realism be abstracted à la Lukács from a select number of works, but

we must use every means, old and new, tested and untested, stemming from art and elsewhere in order to deliver reality over to men as something that can be mastered. . . . Our concept of realism must be broad and political.

Brecht's initial polemic with Lukács is certainly coloured by his own apert, neoplatonic communism of the 1930s. For the later plays exhibit a richness and complexity of characterization which the Hungarian critic seized upon to demonstrate yet another "triumph of realism" (Brecht's phrase for Lukács): namely a cleavage between the dramatist's theory and practice. And yet *Gallée and Mother Courage*, however different from the earlier didactic plays, do not betray the spirit of "epic theatre". For the characters do not so much "embody" their circumstances, in the Lukácsian sense, as prove inadequate to them; far from exhausting a problem, they underline that it remains to be solved.

The relationship of politics to art constitutes the third main difference. Each ideological form, Lukács declares, has its specific object. Each, he suggests, borrowing an idea from Lenin, may be used as a "link in a chain" by means of which the whole chain, namely the totality of a given social reality, may be grasped. In the case of art the link is man. Art, he presumes, unlike politics, can only ask questions not give answers. Thus Lukács cannot conceive, except for short-term agitational purposes, of a respectable political art, for it confuses two separate links of the "chain". Politics, he argues, should enter art only via the question: how does it "strengthen or inhibit . . . the social development of the humanization of man?" (italics added).

Inevitably, the Brecht-Lukács debate has been drawn into the confrontation between the "socialist humanists" (Roger Garaudy, Ernst Fischer and the Marxist "structuralists" (Louis Althusser, Pierre Macherey). Both sides have been criticised of Lukács, though naturally the "humanists" less so. Brecht, like the baby in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, has nearly been torn to pieces. One of the pities and absurdities of this division is that humanism should ever have become a term of opprobrium in the Marxist movement. Certainly, it is necessary to separate elicits from epistemology; Lukács's fault is to have collapsed them. But Marx would never have wished to see his science stripped of its humanist idealism (in the ordinary, non-philosophic sense of the word). And Brecht thought of art not merely as productive, but as *humanly-productive*. His own version of socialist realism reads:

Socialist realist writers are human, that is, friendly to man, and represent relations between men in such a way that socialist impulses are strengthened. They are strengthened by practicable insights into the social mechanism and by the fact that thereby they (the impulses) become pleasures.

Never less, in seeking for a broader, more political theory of the arts, radical groupings ranging from the West Berlin *alternative* to the French *Cahiers du Cinéma* have re-emphasized the art-as-production-and-politics side of Brecht to the exclusion of his humanism. This takes us back to the avant-gardism of the 1920s with its dogma of a politics of form. If Brecht questioned a foundational concept of realism, then he would certainly have quarrelled with a political art which made a cult of exposing its mechanisms, of denouncing representation as bourgeois and counter-revolutionary (e.g. Jean-Luc Godard). Brecht said no more than that "the representation should take second place to the represented", meaning that a form or an image should never become self-contained or "closed". But from here stem all those fetishizations of "open form"—for instance, Umberto Eco—or "exposure of the device" (a revamping of the Russian Formalist slogan) which are supposed to politicize art.

On the other hand, Brecht's emphasis on the dissonance rather than the unity of opposites (which distinguishes him from Lukács) has borne genuine fruit with the Althusserians. Althusser's remarks on the distinction between consciousness and situation in *Materialism* are very acute (see the essay on Brecht and Pétalozi in *For Marx*). Much can be learnt from Macherey's study with the Brechtian title, *Para une théorie de la production littéraire*—except that here again the notion of dissonance and distinction becomes as much of a dogma as the "unity", "essentialism", which it seeks to combat and replace.

Brecht's encounter with Lukács was no mere rejection, for it led him to redefine in a more practical manner the nature of a Marxist humanism. His theory of epic theatre became as a result more flexible, reuniting notions of empathy and enjoyment (in the spirit of the first quotation). On the outcome of their "debate" depends in large measure the future of a Marxist aesthetics. In its present stage Brecht is, understandably, being used to belabour Lukács. A more fruitful stage will have been reached when Lukács can be read through Brechtian eyes.

Brain-workers of the world . . .

EUGEN LOEBL:

Conversations with the Bewildered.
Translated by George Gretton.

192pp. Allen and Unwin. £3.75 (paperback, £1.95).

"Student unrest" has attracted a great deal of attention from respectable academics. Only a few have been able to offer a satisfactory explanation of what is regarded as a new phenomenon. Most of us are aware of what has happened; what we need to know is *why*? For example, is student unrest a temporary affliction of the young, related to specific events like the Vietnam War, or is it a transfiguration of permanently altered values, the beginning of a new revolutionary movement?

There is no doubt where Eugen Loebel stands. His conversations with students in twenty-five American universities, which motivated him to write this book, convinced him that they are sincere, committed, self-sacrificing, self-materialistic and revolutionary, though they are divided over the role of violence. Yet, while Dr Loebel is impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of the students, he is also critical of their ideological apparatus. Although he does not want to appear "the elderly, enlightened gentleman who" condescendingly approves of youthful enthusiasm, but dismisses it because he was once upon a time, just as revolu-

tionary, this is just how he does appear.

Dr Loebel chides the students for using old concepts and assumptions, the same clichés and slogans that he used forty years ago, and for over-estimating the role of the proletariat in creating a new society. Dr Loebel has lived through a revolution carried out in the name of the working class, has discarded his proletarian philosophy, and now sees the intelligentsia as the key. The students are reprimanded for their vision of the future also. Like Bakunin they have a destructive urge, but they have little to the way of an alternative.

What disappoints Dr Loebel most about the students is their nihilism and lack of enthusiasm for science. Dr Loebel has an almost unbounded faith in the liberal role of "science", "mind" and "intelligence". He views the "brain-workers" as the new creators of wealth and a more rational and humane society. Indeed, he cites the Prague Spring of 1968 as an example, that about the mighty Soviet Union to its very foundations by using the weapons of the mind.

This is debatable. Like many other commentators, Dr Loebel underestimates the economic factors that contributed to the reform movement in Czechoslovakia. What is not debatable is that the Soviet Union won.

Using the students as a peg on which to hang his arguments, Dr Loebel discusses, among other things, the corrupting nature of violence, the degeneration of the Soviet Union and, at length, the potential benefits of science. One suspects that in this last respect he owes a great deal to Raymond Aron, although he never mentions him.

The prospect of an established Marxist theoretician with memories of the idealism of the 1920s, the disillusionment of the Stalinist era, and the crushed hopes of 1968, talking to radical American students in an attempt to understand them and to bridge the ideological generation gap is interesting. Yet Dr Loebel is as patronizing towards today's youth as he and his comrades once were towards the proletariat. However hard he tries to avoid it, his tone is pretentious.

Furthermore, Dr Loebel tells us little about the students that the reader could not have surmised for himself, or at least obtained from the media. His argument, particularly at the beginning of the book, is unstructured and politically immature. No reputable Marxist has ever said that a change in the ownership of the means of production was a sufficient condition for a socialist society, and any political scientist will tell him that his vision of an enlightened democracy is impracticable.

As Dr Loebel affirms, the students are bewildered. Unfortunately they will gain little enlightenment from his "confession of faith". His sincerity and earnestness are appealing but his vague utopianism is confusing.

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